the weekly
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PRAY FOR HONG KONG
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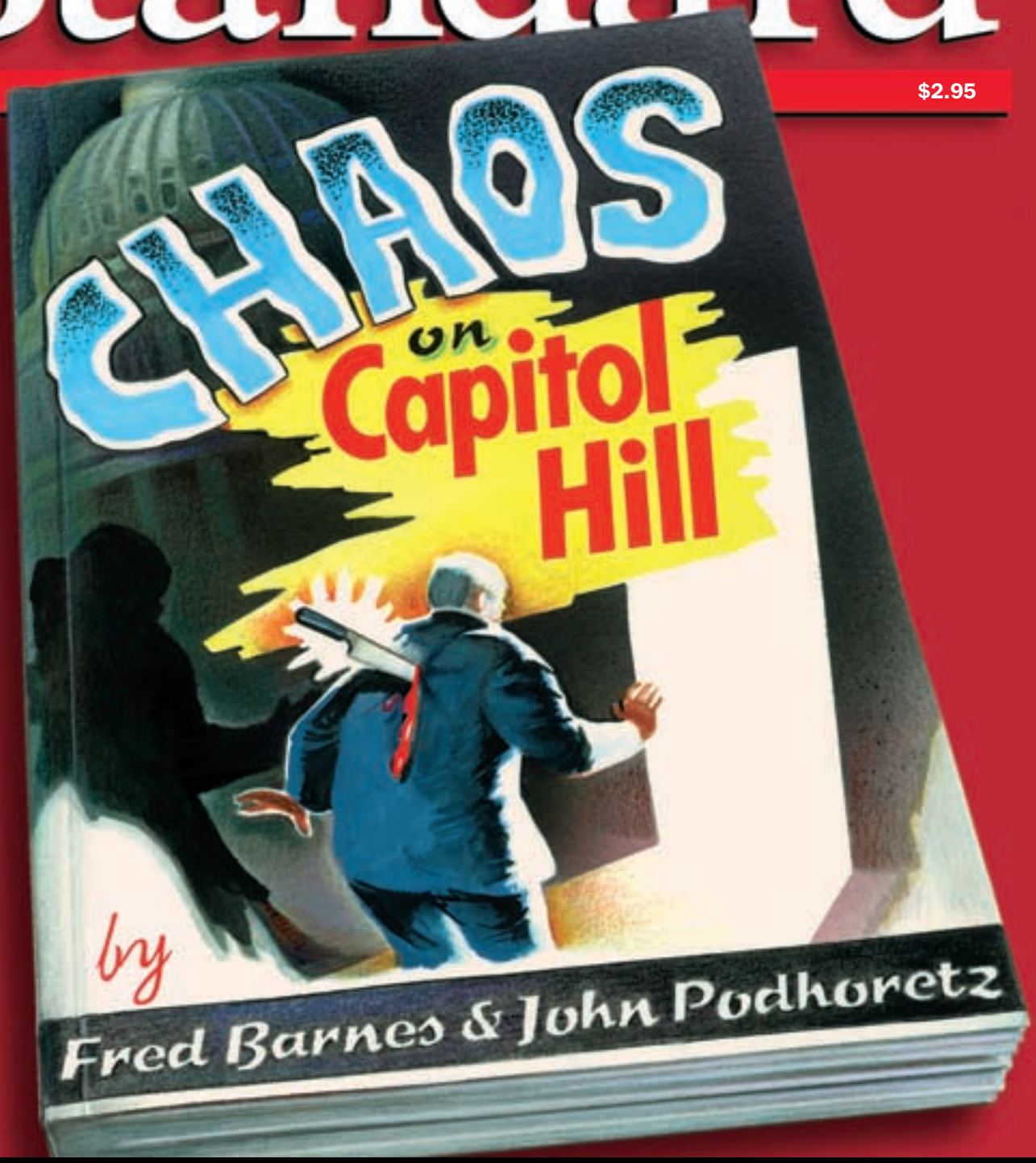

Clinton, Race, and the Slavery Apology
MATTHEW REES • THE EDITORS

The Clare Boothe Luce Century
NOEMIE EMERY

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the weekly Standard

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Save the Wilson Quarterly!

In the ongoing appropriations battles on Capitol Hill, there was good news last week. House Republicans found the nerve to take substantial steps toward eliminating two government programs.

One of them is the National Endowment for the Arts. The case for dismantling the NEA is familiar to anyone who has heard the word "Mapplethorpe." It's badly managed, it funds occasionally raunchy and often third-rate projects, and in crucial ways its continuing influence is unhealthy for the arts as a whole.

It's hard to make such a case against the other program Republicans targeted, however—the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Having somehow resisted the p.c. trendiness that has contaminated the academy, the Wilson Center, under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution, remains one of the few havens for disinterested scholarship in the country. Its flagship publication, the *Wilson Quarterly*, likewise is one of the few scholarly magazines not given over to cant—see, for example, its recent celebration of the Victorian virtues or its cluster of articles, last winter, on "What's Wrong with the American University."

Let's be clear: In the ideal limited government that conservatives envision, there may well be no room for a government-funded Wilson Center. But if it has to go, there are dozens—scores!—of obnoxious programs that should go with it. In their lack of discrimination, House Republicans call to mind Evelyn Waugh's famous comment on the surgeon who removed a benign tumor from Randolph Churchill. "It was a typical triumph of modern science," said Waugh, "to find the only part of Randolph that was not malignant and remove it."

On Deepak Chopra: A Correction and an Apology

The July 1, 1996 issue of The Weekly Standard featured a cover story on the best-selling author Deepak Chopra. While we operated in good faith in publishing the article, we are now convinced that certain allegations reported in that story were false. We also believe that aspects of our general characterization of Dr. Chopra's work were misleading. The Editors take full responsibility for these errors. We apologize to Dr. Chopra and to our readers. We regret any harm that may unjustly have been done to Dr. Chopra's reputation. We trust that this correction and apology will help in repairing any such harm, and will set the record straight.

Based on evidence provided to us over the past year, we are now convinced that Dr. Chopra did not engage the services of a prostitute in 1991. Evidence provided by Dr. Chopra's representatives has convinced us that someone else used a credit card with Dr. Chopra's name and forged Dr. Chopra's signature to charge those services.

Based on evidence that we recently received, we also retract the conclusion that Dr. Chopra plagiarized a chart from another published work. We also would no longer state that his company's herbal remedies have high levels of bug parts and rodent hairs, or levels higher than other such organic products.

More broadly, upon further examination of Dr. Chopra's career and writing, we now believe that the general tone of our article was unfair to Dr. Chopra. While it is obviously appropriate to debate the merits of Dr. Chopra's teachings and writings, the Editors now believe that our cover art and our use of terms like "huckster" and "Hindu televangelist" were inappropriate and unjust.

We believe that Dr. Chopra is sincere and forthright in his teachings, and regret our publication of allegations about Dr. Chopra that we now believe to be erroneous. Thus, we offer this apology to Dr. Chopra and to our readers. *—The Editors*

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Scrapbook

Torture-Me Elmo

American business has become an unflattering caricature of itself in the fight over renewed most-favored-nation trade status for the People's Republic of China. "China MFN is not some ideological debate," National Retail Federation president Tracy Mullin announced at a news conference June 16. "It does have some real-life impact on American families."

Which families? Poor and middle-income families, of course. And what kind of impact? Well, the "Tickle-Me Elmo" doll—that favorite licensed figurine of public television's *Sesame Street*—would rise in price to an unaffordable 50 bucks if China's preferential import tariffs were repealed. So says a study by something called "The Trade Partnership."

Of course, Elmo could be manufactured somewhere other than China. That would keep the price down, you'd think. Truth be told, though, we hope that obvious solution doesn't occur to the National Retail Federation. Why shouldn't Elmo cost a bundle? It would serve to remind American moms and dads that their children are playing with toys made by political prisoners in the Chinese gulag.

Funereal Pol

Good news on the genocidal-monster front: Pol Pot—as of this writing—is reportedly surrounded, pinned down near the Cambodian-Thai border by some 1,000 defectors from his Khmer Rouge. Pol Pot may not have Hitler's or Stalin's or Mao's numbers, but his percentage is impressive: He and his followers killed between 2 and 3 million of their fellow Cambodians in the second half of the 1970s (following America's withdrawal of support from South Vietnam), almost one-third of the entire population. Or, as the *Washington Post* put it last week in a story signed by John D. Cramer: "The Khmer Rouge overthrew the Phnom Penh government in 1975 and launched a four-year experiment in agrarian communism." Well, that's one way to put it.

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Casual

Lasses Without *Lassie*

The other day I came across some diaries from my childhood and browsed in them enough to find them quaint and intriguing. When I actually read them, I realized what gave them their piquancy: They're a window on a child's life before TV.

No, that doesn't make me 65. Like any normal baby boomer, I was weaned on *Howdy Doody* and *Davy Crockett*. It only means my family moved to New Zealand when I was 9, before television had arrived there. We lived there for three years, almost innocent of electronic entertainment.

They did have radio down under in 1957, and my sisters and I liked the program "Life with Dexter," about a boy who called his sister "Compost." Our housekeeper listened to the radio, too. Mary was 19 and had grown up in an orphanage in Guernsey before emigrating to New Zealand with her boyfriend to get married and start a new life. Once, she sent in a request to a pop station, and we were thrilled when they played her song, "Red Sails in the Sunset."

There were also movies—a few of them. In the two and a half years of my New Zealand diaries, I mention going to "the pictures" all of 10 times.

But then who had time for movies? Our days were bursting with live action. Steffy, the sister I shared a room with, was an inspired and prolific dressmaker for our old-fashioned dolls, Patience and Marilla, while I specialized in accessories: hats, parasols, strings of beads, and tiny books. Steffy was also the prime mover of our nearly incessant dressups, pretend, and full-scale theatrical productions, as well as a fabled storyteller. She entertained me by the hour, drawing pictures to illustrate her stories as she went.

We both liked to read—Enid Blyton and the Anne of Green Gables series, Louisa May Alcott, Classics Comics, and something I call "love comics." Mother read us grownup books: *Jane Eyre*, *Oliver Twist*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, all of Jane Austen, and a history of Britain called *Our Island Story*.

In addition to each other, Steffy and I and our younger sister Jenny had best friends who also were sisters. The Tingey girls lived a few doors away, and we were in and out of each other's houses every day and slept over many nights.

Steffy and I, and Patricia and Helen Tingey, had a club called B.D.A., which stood for Big Dark Alley, after the closet where we held our first meetings. It was a kind of homemade Girl Scouts, with badges for tree climbing and cooking and sewing, rather gruesome "loyalty tests," a secret language, and prayers. We spied on neighbors, hoping to "get into a mystery," but never did. Our mascots were small plastic ballerinas, and when the paint chipped off them, we cut off their heads to remember them by, then ceremonially cast the bodies, bedded in a box of seafern weighted with stones, into the Hutt River, a bike ride away.

Near the end of our stay, our family and the Tingeys took a two-week camping trip in the South Island and walked the famous Milford Track, three days through the bush. For months beforehand, to get in training, we took Sunday hikes in the hills or around the undeveloped side of Wellington Harbor to Pencarrow Lighthouse—or, best of all, to Waitarere, where the beach boasted the steel hulk of a wrecked ship that we climbed on when the tide was right. On these excursions, we sang, "got the pip" with one another (NZ slang for quarreling) and made up, had picnics, and watched Nandi, our golden retriever, swim her heart out in ocean surf or inland streams. Once we went mushrooming in the early morning, and several times on coastal walks we gathered mussels from the rocks.

The idyll, of course, ended. When we said goodbye, "Helen and I had to be dragged apart. I cried and cried." Still, sailing back to America—16 days across the Pacific—was a kind transition. It even began our initiation into the electronic culture: On the U.S.S. *Mariposa*, we watched a movie every day.

We arrived in San Francisco on June 26, 1960. In the years we had been gone, we'd kept in touch with home only by letter—no casual round-the-world phone calls, much less e-mail. It's hard to imagine a 1990s nearly-12-year-old writing with the ingenuousness of my entry for that day:

"Were up at 7:30 to see us pass under the Golden Gate Bridge! It was beautiful. Uncle Fred and Aunt Riley were there to meet us. They took us to their apartment to have some refreshments. We spoke to Grandma and Grandpa on the phone. It was lovely! Took Nandi for a swim and had lunch at a tippical American resteraunt. Had lovely lunch. Took Nandi to the SPCA [for the night]. We got settled in the hotel and had dinner. Mother and Dad took Fred and Riley out to dinner at Fisherman's Wharf while we watched TV at the apartment. Saw *Ed Sullivan* and *Lassie*. Super!"

Claudia Winkler

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One Stubborn Soldier

Tucker Carlson's "The Making of a Feminist Hero" (June 9), in which he accuses me of hoodwinking the national media into believing that the Pentagon applies a double standard when sexual misconduct occurs, contains several errors.

First, he brands me one of television's Biggest Liars of the Year for stating on *Good Morning America* that Air Force women are four times more likely than men to be prosecuted for fraternization. I based that on Air Force figures reported in *USA Today* on April 4, 1997. The figures show that so far in 1997, five women and seven men have been prosecuted for fraternization. Since women constitute about 15 percent of the Air Force, this works out to four times as likely. Air Force secretary Sheila Widnall submitted a letter to *USA Today* attacking the conclusions of the earlier article. Her letter, however, did not challenge the accuracy of the statistics I relied on.

Second, Carlson erred in that Lt. Lisa Kelly was charged with fraternization—not adultery. And "Citizen Soldier's" press release did spell Sen. Slade Gorton's name correctly (Carlson's measure of our professionalism).

Recent developments within the highest reaches of the military command add further weight to our contention that a gender-based double standard exists when sexual misconduct is involved. Two Army generals (Maj. Gen. John Longhouser and Brig. Gen. Stephen Xenakis) and a Navy rear admiral (R.M. Mitchell) have all been transferred or relieved of their commands in the past two weeks because of accusations or admissions of adultery. A fourth, Air Force General Joseph Ralston, has just withdrawn his name from contention as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff because of an adulterous affair in his past.

While each of these generals has suffered adverse action, none is being court-martialed and all will retire with full pensions and other privileges.

Tod Ensign
New York, NY

Tucker Carlson responds: ***Ensign did not originally claim that women in the Air Force are more likely than men to be prosecuted. Instead, during his May 19 appearance on* Good Morning America*, he maintained that "the Air Force is prosecuting four times more women than men for fraternization." There's a big difference between these statements, but both are false. The data Ensign cites from* USA Today *are meaningless, both because they represent only the first four months of the year, and because the sample he uses—12 prosecutions out of almost 400,000 Air Force personnel—is absurdly small. It takes a lot of brass to deduce a witch hunt from numbers like these, and indeed data from last year suggest the opposite, that women in the Air Force are considerably less likely than men to be prosecuted for adultery.***

But Ensign is nothing if not bold. One example: Ensign claims he spelled Sen. Gorton's name correctly in a press release Citizen Soldier sent out earlier this year. It would hardly be worth responding to such a minor point, except that, along with his letter to the editor, Ensign faxed the press release in question, presumably as exculpatory evidence. Sen. Gorton's name was still misspelled, twice.

Reserve for Kasich

I found it difficult to judge whether Andrew Ferguson intended to offer unhedged praise of John Kasich ("It's His Party," June 16). No explicit reservation was stated, but Ferguson repeatedly quotes Kasich's self-praise. This could be an implicit display of Ferguson's limited enthusiasm for his subject.

My political support for John Kasich will wait until he displays a fuller understanding of the great misfortune Bill Clinton has visited upon this country.

Lawrence H. O'Neill
New York, NY

Big Brother Is Watching

I was dismayed to learn that Neil Munro has defied common sense to favor the Clinton administration's encryption technology ("The Cyberspace Liberation Front," June 16). By insinuating that privacy advocates are paranoid and the administration's goal is simply "to protect investigators' interest" in accessing encrypted material to conduct a court-ordered wiretap, he missed the entire point.

Those of us who have been vocal on this issue know that it is not what the government is trying to accomplish, but the way they're going about it. Their method poses a real danger to individual privacy in this country. It is a fact.

Federal agencies are currently seeking the ability, both legally and technically, to access information from our computers, cellular phones, and electronic traffic in general. FBI director Louis Freeh has made no secret of that. He has been quoted as saying that he wants to use encryption to catch people "who might be planning a crime." That statement is extremely vague and alarming to Americans who value their right to conduct private conversations, whether by e-mail or phone.

Moreover, administration opponents consist of more than just free-speech/free-market advocates, as Munro suggests. The greatest support comes from people throughout the country who value their individual privacy and want the Clinton administration to respect the same. Somewhere down the road, our efforts will be rewarded and perhaps even respected by elitist journalists like Neil Munro.

Lisa S. Dean
Free Congress Foundation
Washington, DC

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Correspondence

Gorby Rising in the East?

I was disappointed to read Peter Rodman's reference to Iranian president-elect Mohammed Khatemi as a possible "Mikhail Gorbachev of the Iranian Revolution" ("Mullah Dearest," June 16). While many in the United States believe Khatemi is Iran's Gorbachev, their analysis could stand a dose of the facts.

Khatemi's record does not indicate that he is a reformer. His family came to prominence due to close relations with the family of the late Ayatollah Khomeini, relations that continue to this day. In the '70s, Khatemi worked the Militant Clerics Association and the revolutionaries' propaganda arm. By 1982, his radical credentials were so well established that he was named minister of culture. Khatemi's lone reformist acts came in this post when he slightly loosened controls on media and allowed live music. Accordingly, Khatemi's actions indicate a desire to trim the system's worst excesses, not reform the system itself.

Even if Khatemi were a reformer, he would face serious obstacles in the Iranian system. To initiate reforms, Khatemi must get the approval of reactionary spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khameini. Moreover, Khatemi has to cope with outgoing President Rafsanjani, who will head an expanded Expediency Council, and radical darling Nateq Nouri, the speaker of the parliament. Therefore, if Khatemi wants to reform Iranian society, he will need to make concessions to the reactionaries—probably in the form of a tougher foreign policy. Thus, Khatemi's politics and obstacles will mean a Khrushchev-like era (which brought us the Cuban missile crisis) in Iran.

Bill Shingleton
Alexandria, VA

Deposition in Question

In reviewing Bob Bennett's fulminations about Paula Jones's personal background, the Scrapbook (June 16) reported Bennett's leak that the defense team had "secured a deposition" from one of her former employers who was prepared to testify she was a "tramp." It is doubtful that, whatever he may have said, it would have been in the form of a deposition. In all probability it was an *ex parte* statement given to one of Bennett's investigators.

The effect of Judge Susan Webber Wright's ruling to delay trial during the president's incumbency is to hold discovery in abeyance as well. Depositions require notice to all opposing parties and an opportunity to attend and cross-examine. This procedure is designed to eliminate "surprises" at trial, as threatened by Bennett.

Griffin Smith
Little Rock, AK

The Still-Clueless GOP

William Kristol's skewering of Trent Lott ("Clintonized Republicans," June 9) was abundantly deserved. Lott's clumsy comments regarding the Kelly Flinn matter bespeak either breathtaking gullibility, egregious misapprehension, gross disingenuousness, or blatant pandering. None of which qualifies him to be the leader of anything.

John E. Hendershot, Jr.
Paramount, CA

Kudos to William Kristol and David Frum ("Confused Conservatives," June 9) for their bulls-eye commentaries on "The Clueless GOP." The performance of Republicans since the election has been pathetic. As a Republican, I want the editors to be tougher on Lott, Gingrich, et al. These are the men who represent our party and our ideas. To see them behaving so fecklessly is an embarrassment to all of us who collect elephants.

I know that the Clinton administration is one of the most corrupt of the twentieth century, and I could not care less. I know that President Clinton has no core values or beliefs and that Hillary Clinton is a duplicitous Arkansas attorney. But I expect Democrats to behave this way.

What does bother me is that Republicans are so politically ignorant. His ridiculous attempt to "get real" during the Kelly Flinn affair was about as transparent as Gingrich's love for beach volleyball. The budget deal is almost a complete cave to President Clinton, Tom Daschle, and Katie Couric. The decision to attach riders to the flood-relief bill served only to reinforce negative stereotypes of the Republican party.

Robert Vane
Indianapolis, IN

William Kristol's scathing analysis of Trent Lott's left-field remarks about the Kelly Flinn debacle was exactly on the mark. This is just another sterling example of why so many conservatives are utterly dismayed with the leadership of the 105th Congress. It is why I refuse to contribute to any national Republican cause at this time. Whether it be the further surrender of our sovereignty via a Chemical Weapons Convention, the worldwide export of Planned Parenthood through generous appropriations, sponsorship of new medical encroachments, or the massive infusion of new funds for a dubious Department of Education, this is a far cry from the promise that Republican victories brought in the 1994 and 1996 elections. Lott and Company should understand that a vital part of their base may just sit out the next one rather than support a Clinton with a trunk, tusks, and large floppy ears.

Paul M. Vetterick
Beaverton, OR

Grand Proportions

I enjoyed reading the delightful essay "Homeophobia" (June 2) by Christopher Caldwell. Describing the ingredients of the homeopathic medication that was prescribed to him, he tells us that it contained only very little of the poisonous ingredients. For instance, "only .5 x 10^{12} mg of belladonna." But that is 500 metric tons. Surely it should have been 0.5 x 10^{-12}.

Gerardo Joffe
San Francisco, CA

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Bill Clinton's Groupthink Quilt

Bill Clinton is quite plainly going claustrophobic inside the dollhouse presidency he has constructed. As "time runs out of my hourglass," he says with characteristic smarm, "I get more impatient to do everything I think I have to do to prepare this country for a new century." So five years into his search for immortality, the president announces a startling discovery, in a college commencement address the White House is unashamed to pimp as "historic." Almost by his lonesome, we are given to understand, Clinton has pinpointed the "most perplexing" question in contemporary life, the "greatest challenge we face" as a people. The matter is fraught with risk. But fear not; Bill Clinton is brave and true: "Emotions may be rubbed raw, but we must begin." He promises to lead us in a "great" conversation. An "unprecedented" conversation, even. About race.

LED BY THIS MOST VOLUBLE AND LEAST ELOQUENT OF PRESIDENTS, THE WHITE HOUSE WILL TALK RACE TO DEATH.

The mind reels. And, if it is working as it should, the mind comes close to panic that an American president could so casually and selfishly manipulate so serious and universal a concern of our politics.

In 1861, in his First Inaugural, an earlier, more modest president labeled Southern enslavement of the black race the "only substantial dispute" in the United States. Where race was involved, Lincoln famously proclaimed a "patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people" and advised his countrymen to "think calmly and *well*, upon this whole subject." By 1863, at Gettysburg, Lincoln knew that pure reason would not be enough, that our liberty would be refreshed only with Union and rebel blood.

And by 1865, in his awesome Second Inaugural, Lincoln had fully reconceived the question of race—and the entire meaning of America—in quasi-religious terms. Racism was the country's original sin. The Civil War was God's punishment, the "woe due to those by whom the offense came." And "if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

Our presidency once walked upright. Today, its knuckles scrape the dirt. Bill Clinton, for purposes of his own vanity, proposes to associate himself with the still-central, unresolved question of American justice. He will do it the only way he knows how: crudely, crassly. There will be an endless round of "town-hall meetings." There will be consultations with a seven-member blue-ribbon panel of advisers, all of whom already agree with him on most of the particulars. There will be an anniversary photo-op at Little Rock Central High School in September. There will be a—yet again, "historic"—White House conference on hate crimes in November. Led by this most voluble and least eloquent of presidents, they will talk race to death, slice it and dice it ever finer, until it is neutralized of its power, drained of its principle, reduced to just another narrowly calculated "issue."

Bill Clinton is well known for narrow calculation, of course, so there is ready-made suspicion about the methods he will employ in "One America: The President's Initiative on Race." At a June 12 press briefing on the initiative, Clinton's deputy chief of staff, Sylvia Mathews, was asked, "How much of this has been polled by the White House or by DNC pollsters for the White House?" The exchange went as follows:

MATHEWS: *That's a question I'll have to defer.*
QUESTIONER: *I mean, you don't know?*

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MATHEWS: *In terms of how much—I think, understanding some of the issues that—in terms of do people think [race] is a problem and that sort of thing . . .*

QUESTIONER: *No, did you poll? Did you do polling? Or did Penn and Schoen or Greenberg do polling? Anyone?*

MATHEWS: *The issue in question of do people consider this a problem . . .*

QUESTIONER: *No, the question is polling—just did you . . .*

MATHEWS: *Yes.*

Sure, they did polling. Sure, also, that they will not invite us to think calmly and well about this initiative's "five central goals" and subsidiary "five central elements." We will be invited instead to contemplate our navels. President Clinton calls special attention to Gallup poll results indicating that Americans believe more than 20 percent of us are black when the true figure is only 12 percent. What does this mean? It doesn't matter; Clinton is "stunned" by data like this, and we should be, too. In his June 14 speech at the University of California, San Diego, the president urged us not to forget persistent inner-city friction with "Korean and Arab grocers," "resurgent anti-Semitism" on college campuses, and hostility to immigrants from "the former Communist countries." If we take such problems "out of our insides and discuss them," Clinton argued in a series of interviews surrounding his speech, "I think we'll have more fun. I think we'll feel better about ourselves."

WHEN IT COMES TO RACE IN AMERICA, THE DO-SOMETHING FIXATION IS A TRAP. AND IT IS PRECISELY THE TRAP BILL CLINTON IS EAGER TO SPRING.

Stirring, isn't it? The president is already being banged around, from left and right, for the apparent empty symbolism of his race initiative. For two days following his San Diego address, Clinton publicly flirted with the idea of a formal national apology to the black descendants of American slavery. People went nuts. How would this work, and what sense would it make? Northern soldiers, 360,000 of them, roughly one in five of all who fought, were martyred in the war to end slavery. Do the descendants of Northern loyalists owe anyone an apology? What of the majority of current Americans whose ancestors didn't arrive in the United States until after the Civil War? What, even, of the slavemasters' descendants, those who can be identified? Blood guilt is supposed to be an alien, un-American idea. We are all in this together, aren't we? And what use would "sorry" be, in any case, as comfort for the wound of human bondage?

Good questions, all of them. And all of them ultimately beside the point. Empty symbolism is not what's wrong with Bill Clinton's race initiative, as his critics contend. Democratic activists want him to *do* something, to spend money on the poverty that still follows blackness like a plague. Republicans, many of them, want to *do* something, too. Newt Gingrich, for instance, now advances a 10-point plan "to heal America's racial divide," 10 "practical, down-to-earth, problem-solving efforts which will improve the lives of all Americans." "Perspiration and teamwork," the speaker says, "will dissolve racism faster than therapy and dialogue."

But perspiration and teamwork, sadly, aren't the answer either. This do-something fixation is a trap. And it is precisely the trap Bill Clinton is eager to spring. In San Diego he said his life had been "immeasurably enriched" by the Torah, by the Koran, by Buddhism and Hinduism, by Hispanic reverence for "*la familia*," by the "food, the music and the art and the culture" of American Indians—and everyone else, collectively. It was marvelous self-parody. But he didn't mean it that way. He meant it as a model. The president genuinely intends for America to sew itself into an immeasurably enriched quilt of groupthink diversity. If this warm, smothering blanket can be made large enough, he hopes, the discrete problem of race will seem smaller.

But it will not go away. He doesn't *want* it to go away; he wants only to disguise it. The politics of race in America, for all the president's gush, are not about the "experience" of Korean grocers or resurgent anti-Semitism or the Koran. Race politics are about an especially invidious discrimination. They are today about affirmative action—about whether the government will classify its citizens as black and white, or instead simply as individuals.This is, indissolubly, a sharp question of right and wrong, just as it was in 1865.

In his glancing reference to affirmative action in San Diego, President Clinton demanded that its opponents "come up with an alternative." But the moral response to the sin of racialism, Lincoln taught us, is repentance. It does not involve "doing something"; it involves *not* doing something. Like some latter-day Stephen Douglas, Bill Clinton would deny and evade the moral weight of our racial conundrum. And he would now enlist the entire nation in the denial and evasion. The president has done some dishonorable things since he took office in 1993. This is one of the worst.

—David Tell, for the Editors

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Birth of an Apology

by Matthew Rees

Resolved by the House of Representatives that the Congress apologizes to African-Americans whose ancestors suffered as slaves under the Constitution and laws of the United States until 1865.

On June 11, the night before Democratic representative Tony Hall introduced his resolution apologizing for slavery, he called Jesse Jackson. During their 15-minute conversation, Jackson expressed support for Hall's effort, telling him, "I don't have any problem" with the proposed apology. But when Jackson appeared on *Meet the Press* a few days later, he had changed his tune. Hall's proposal was mere "emotional symbolism," said Jackson. "It's just not a good thing. It has no substantive value to it."

Jackson's flip-flop underscores the tricky politics of the proposed apology. For even though the resolution was originally sponsored by six liberal Democrats and six conservative Republicans, it's been the target of bipartisan sniping. Jackson's sentiments have been reiterated on the left by spokesmen like black historian Roger Wilkins and on the right by the likes of House speaker Newt Gingrich, Senate majority leader Trent Lott, and presidential aspirant Lamar Alexander.

The Clinton administration, meanwhile, has been left flummoxed by the proposal. A week before Hall introduced the apology, he called the White House, having just learned of the president's plan to deliver a speech about race relations in San Diego on June 14. But in a brief conversation, deputy chief of staff Sylvia Mathews refused to say whether the White House would support Hall's effort. He asked for a talk with Clinton, but never got one.

White House aides were waging an aggressive PR campaign to launch Clinton's race-relations initiative and resented the timing of Hall's announcement, two days before the San Diego speech. Fears the announcement would dilute the impact of Clinton's speech were borne out when Gingrich made headlines on June 13 by blasting the apology idea as "backward-oriented" and "an avoidance of problem-solving that strikes me as a dead end." The president was asked about the apology during one of his many interviews that weekend, but refused to endorse it. "An apology, under the right circumstances, those things can be quite important," Clinton told CNN. But before making a decision, he said he needed "more time to think about it."

Hall is an unlikely candidate to be leading the apology campaign. For one thing, he's white, as are all the other original cosponsors, and he has no discernible history on racial issues (though his Dayton, Ohio, district is 18 percent black). His real passion during his 18-year House tenure has been hunger issues. Since traveling to impoverished North Korea in April, he's lobbied—unsuccessfully so far—for U.S. humanitarian aid to that country. And in 1993, he staged a 22-day hunger strike after the House Democratic leadership abolished the Select Committee on Hunger.

Hall is no granola-eating liberal, though. He's a pro-life evangelical who leads Wednesday-morning prayer sessions at Washington's Martin Luther King Library. The idea for an apology came to him in January 1996 while he was watching C-SPAN broadcast a New York prayer meeting. He watched as Reggie White, an ordained preacher and a defensive tackle for the Green Bay Packers, debated B.J. Weber, a New York minister, about what constituted a proper governmental response once slavery had been abolished.

The exchange sparked Hall's interest, and he spent the next 18 months researching an apology. He suggested the idea to scores of people and was pleasantly surprised to find it supported by conservatives such as Lou Sheldon of the Traditional Values Coalition and liberals such as Barbara Skinner, a former executive director of the Congressional Black Caucus. Hall then had the Library of Congress investigate slavery's aftermath and discovered the only apology had come from tribal chiefs in Ghana, who a few years ago acknowledged their ancestors' complicity in the slave trade.

Since Hall introduced the apology resolution on June 12, it's picked up five additional cosponsors and, coupled with Clinton's San Diego speech, has made race relations the subject of the day. On June 18, *USA Today* wrote up the apology on its front page and *Nightline* had Hall debate Roger Wilkins. And on June 20, two black columnists took opposing positions—Donna Britt endorsed the apology, while Clarence Page came out against it.

Hall acknowledges the value of his proposal is limited, saying, "It's not going to put anyone to work or create any day-care centers." But he's pressing on because he believes "reconciliation should begin by saying, 'I'm sorry.'" Perhaps it should, though some might very well think Lincoln said that in 1865, and indeed that the nation said it in the Civil War. In any case, Hall's idea is not without risks for race relations today. An ABC News poll last week found it sharply divided blacks and whites. Wouldn't a congressional debate on slavery exacerbate rather than ease racial tensions?

Matthew Rees is a staff writer for The Weekly Standard.

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A Hong Kong Diary

by Neal B. Freeman

Saturday. I have been coming to Hong Kong for more than 25 years, sometimes to do business, sometimes to prepare for trips to Taipei or Beijing. Other times, I come just to catch a glimpse of what comes next in the global economy. Hong Kong is not so much a country or a colony as a running convention of go-getters, people beating a path to your door with better mousetraps. When Bill Gates talks about the "frictionless economy" in cyberspace, he's really talking about a digital version of Hong Kong. Here there are no barriers to success. Or failure.

After the usual death-defying plunge to the tarmac at Hong Kong's outmoded Kai Tak airport, we taxi to a stop next to a Cathay Pacific jumbo jet. Owned until recently by Swire, one of the great British trading houses, the Cathay Pacific airline is now controlled by Citic, a mainland conglomerate closely associated with the People's Liberation Army. The Cathay stock passed to the PLA at a remarkably low price. As did a chunk of China Light & Power, the big public utility. As did a big piece of Hong Kong Telecom, the world-class telephone system. Sounds like an infrastructure play, like Beijing is making offers that can't be refused.

We check into the Peninsula Hotel, where high tea is preceded immediately by lunch and followed immediately by dinner. What better place to watch the sun rise for the last time on the British empire.

Sunday. The *South China Morning Post* has a poll this weekend. It reports that 72 percent of all residents are positive about the future of Hong Kong. Most of the rest think the future will be about as good as the recent past. Even in America, perhaps the only country in the world where change is routinely equated with progress, euphoria has never run this high. What's up? Friends here offer three explanations. First, the poll has been conducted ineptly, and possibly on purpose. Second, those being polled suspect their views may be transmitted to the PLA and thus they have the smiley faces painted on. Third, the colony is filled with cockeyed optimists.

I think it's #3. China is the most nubile market in the global economy, and the greed instinct, never well modulated here, is throbbing loudly. Hong Kongers want a piece of that action. A second theme is the palpable fact of ethnic nationalism. Everywhere one sees evidence of Chinese pride, the sense that Beijing is reversing an ugly historical injustice. One sees it even among Western-educated, Chardonnay-sipping upper-crusters.

Hong Kong is not a settled community caught flatfooted by a Red revolution, after all. The locals came here in waves, most of them fleeing terror—the Taiping rebellion more than a century ago, the warlords in the '20s, Japan's invading army in the '30s, Mao in the '40s, and the cultural revolution in the '60s and '70s. In each case, it was a difficult passage, no stroll across the border from Tijuana. Even into the '80s, they dashed past the attack dogs or tried to float past the sharks at Mirs Bay.

In 1984, it was made clear that the game would change—and exactly when. In the so-called Joint Declaration of that year, Margaret Thatcher pledged that the British garrison would sail out of Victoria Harbor on June 30, 1997. Given that kind of lead time, Hong Kong's highly mobile residents mobilized again. By the thousands and then by the tens of thousands they airmailed themselves into exile. By the early '90s, 70,000 Hong Kongers a year were moving abroad, most of them to Canada or Australia, some to the U.K. and the west coast of the United States. It was the greatest migration of wealth and talent in the second half of the century, and cities that recruited effectively—Vancouver, Sydney, and the rest—propelled themselves into the front ranks of the world economy.

And just who was it that packed up and shipped out? Some of the best and brightest, to be sure. And the politically radioactive. They reckoned that their names had been inscribed on special lists in Beijing. Why wait around and take the risk? But even as the exiles left, their places were taken by new arrivals, many of them PRCers looking to beat the post-handover rush. So in raw numbers, the population has remained at approximately 6 million, but it's a different 6 million: Almost everybody wants to be here, wants to be a part of greater China.

There are exceptions, of course. My new friend Lo Fu made a place for himself on one of those lists in Beijing. He had a nasty habit of saying what was on his mind. So the PRC came after him, and he escaped the mainland, making his way to Hong Kong—and now this! Think of a young José making his way across the straits from Havana only to read in his *Miami Herald* that Lawton Chiles had just ceded South Florida to Fidel.

Monday. You've read about the democracy movement here, Martin Lee and company? You may have read more about them than the average Hong Konger. The democrats are hyperactive, skilled at media relations, and indisputably on the side of the angels. But at one level they are running a theme park for the amusement of Western journalists. They do not appear to be organically connected to the people they represent.

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When they speak to their constituents, the democrats are shouting into a stiff breeze of confusion laced with indifference. Hong Kongers have been British subjects for 99 years and expect to be Chinese subjects for at least as long. They have little experience with democracy and, truth be told, not much interest in politics. To be sure, a little pressure from the heel of a boot could excite the democratic instinct, but as of now the message just does not resonate.

Then there are the refugees from the Chinese mainland now well settled here. They despised the old PRC enough to risk everything in a mad dash for the border. Now they look forward to the "Special Administrative Region" of the PRC that Hong Kong will soon become. They thus want to give every appearance of believing that Beijing has changed. Indeed, they are rolling out the inevitably red carpet. Parties, concerts, light shows, parades, mass dancing in the parks, a "Reunification Spectacular at Happy Valley"—events are scheduled hour by hour until the moment of the handover. At the tony Regent Hotel, under a Union Jack snapping smartly in the harbor breeze, a countdown clock ticks off the seconds.

Michel Setboun/Tony Stone Images

TUESDAY. The Hang Seng Index, the equivalent of the Dow Jones Industrial average, continues to outperform even the U.S. market, fueled by fresh money in so-called red chip stocks—securities in companies with mainland connections. At the current pace, stock-market activity for the first six months of the year will exceed that for all of 1996, which was itself the most active year on record. A friend at First Boston—a mainland-born, U.S.-passport-holding, Mandarin-speaking banker—tells me that real-estate prices are doing even better. A house he bought on Victoria Peak in 1986 has appreciated "eight or nine times." The new real-estate buyers? Mainland businessmen as well as multinational corporations stocking up on executive housing.

Think of June 30 as a giant initial public offering and you've got a sense of the deal. The PRC will be obliged, it is presumed, to "support" the deal in the aftermarket by propping up prices for stocks and real property. But after a decent market-clearing interval—say, a year or two—what's left? To me it looks like a classic bubble market. The really smart money is, as always, carefully hedged. Most of the Hong Kong elite hold foreign passports (500,000 of them at a guesstimate), stuff cash in foreign bank accounts, and position close relatives in London, San Francisco, Sydney, or elsewhere. More than half of the companies listed on the Hang Seng are now domiciled abroad, up from fewer than 10 percent in the mid '80s. For all their booster rallies, these All-Star capitalists could be in business in some third country by next week. An item in the paper caught my eye: "Indian socialites are packing their most dazzling jewelry into travel bags and heading for Singapore as the handover approaches."

Interesting conversation with a military attaché from a European country. Why, he wanted to know, is the United States allowing Hong Kong favored status on export controls? Didn't I understand, he pressed, that Hong Kong would instantaneously transship to China any U.S. technology with military application? Didn't I understand that Japan and other sophisticated nations were tightening controls even as we were relaxing them? How could we be so naive? he harrumphed. I recited the U.S. position as best I could discern it. But his question lingered, reminding me later of the dog that did not bark in the strange case of Hong Kong. In four long days of talk, interview, and harangue, the name Bill Clinton has never come up. A neat trick. How does the leader of the world's only superpower make himself irrelevant to the biggest geopolitical story of the decade? I find it hard to believe that Ronald Reagan would have looked on quietly as the "handover" became the coda to the American century.

WEDNESDAY. At last I meet somebody who is hightailing it out of here. A boutique dealmaker, he has done fabulously well in Hong Kong but is planning to move to the New York area, to a "place with good schools, probably Greenwich, Connecticut." Why the move? Does he tremble at the prospect of the Big Red Machine rolling down Salisbury Road? Hardly. "What I used to think of as excitement now looks to me like hassle." I may be witness to the birth of a new lifestyle option—moving to New York for the quiet life.

One hears reports of beeper messages intercepted, newspaper columnists self-censored, political conversations hushed. But at the official level, the Chinese

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government is advancing in small, barely perceptible increments, none of them so discretely shocking as to cause the frog to jump from the hot water. In odd moments, though, one calibrates the cumulative distance traveled. Tonight at the China Club, where the politically correct gather in retro-chic, faux-Shanghai surroundings to prolong the business day, I have a drink with a local lawyer. He is an American employed by a fancy New York firm, a veteran mid-level appointee of the Reagan administration. He drops a phrase into conversation that comes back to me hours later as I ride the last Star Ferry back to Kowloon. When he speaks of the final takeover of the mainland by Mao Zedong five decades ago, he calls it the "liberation of '49."

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Pataki to NYC: Control Rent

by William Tucker

At midnight, June 16, New York City stepped out from under rent control for the first time in 50 years. Five minutes later, like groundhogs frightened by their own shadows, Gov. George Pataki and state senate majority leader Joe Bruno went scurrying back into their holes. New York's flirtation with free enterprise was over. It was a remarkable capitulation. For six months, Bruno had kept New York City on tenterhooks by threatening to let rent regulations expire on June 15. His condition was that the Democrat-controlled state assembly agree to phase out those regulations sometime in the foreseeable future. Pataki, who tried for a while to remain neutral, was eventually drawn into the fray. His compromise proposal was "vacancy decontrol," whereby controls would be lifted on apartments newly vacated. This system, Pataki obsequiously assured everyone, would "harm no existing tenants," but might eventually lead to an end to rent control some 30 or 40 years down the road.

Yet even this glacially paced phase-out was unacceptable to Sheldon Silver, the speaker of the state assembly and de facto spokesman for New York City's 2 million rent-regulated tenants. Silver refused to accept the vacancy-decontrol compromise precisely because it might have ended rent control at some point in the 21st century.

So Silver won the stare-down. After months of frustrating negotiation, Pataki, Silver, and Bruno emerged from the state capitol building at five minutes after midnight to announce that rent control would be extended for another six years—just beyond the end of Pataki's assumed second term. Silver's one concession? A "vacancy allowance" that would permit a 20 percent increase when an apartment changes hands. The current allowance, set annually by the Rent Guidelines Board, usually runs about 6 to 8 percent.

The pity is that New Yorkers were actually getting used to the idea that rent control might not go on forever. Although the hysteria had risen to a fever pitch (many people seemed to expect that evictions would begin Monday morning), the newspapers, for the first time in memory, were openly speculating on what life might be like after rent control. Tenants groups had set up 24-hour phone banks to advise tenants of their rights under the city's myriad tenant-protection laws. Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who supported rent control throughout, was promising to bop a landlord on the head every time he walked down the street. Manhattan and Brooklyn prosecutors Robert Morgenthau and Charles Hynes had set up special task forces to fine and imprison landlords for "harassment" (often a synonym for "trying to collect rent").

But the immediate impact of letting the rent laws lapse probably would have been nil. Nearly all tenants are covered by leases, and landlords are required to give three months' notice before offering new leases. Landlords—well organized for once—had promised to be reasonable in asking for increases. By the time the first lease renewals came, around October, some of the 50,000 apartments being "warehoused" by their owners might have come on the market. The scarcities that have driven Manhattan rents through the roof might have abated. After three months of seeing that the sky didn't fall without rent control, it might have been possible to discuss the subject rationally.

Instead, Pataki and Bruno's capitulation will only drive New York City further down the road of self-destruction. The housing market is now in what might be called "advanced rent-control rigor mortis." Although the median rent is $620, the median rent for housing advertised in the *New York Times* in April was $1,400, and the most commonly advertised rent was $2,000. San Francisco, the nation's only other major rent-controlled city, has the exact same high-rent profile. (See the Cato Institute's "How Rent Control Drives Out Affordable Housing," published in May.)

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What is happening in both cities is that the two-thirds of the rental market occupied by regulated tenants has become frozen. No tenant ever moves, and when they die, they pass the apartment on to the nearest relative. Consequently, everyone looking for a new apartment ends up chasing the one-third of the market that is unregulated (smaller buildings, buildings built after the regulations went into effect, rented condominiums). Prices for these apartments are driven sky-high. It is almost impossible these days to find a studio apartment in Manhattan for less than $1,500 a month. In San Francisco, one-bedroom apartments rent for $2,000. Everybody takes these to be "market prices," but they are actually the artifacts of rent control. In non-rent-controlled cities, units advertised in the newspapers invariably cluster around the median rent for that city (usually between $450 and $650).

As a result, young people cannot even think of moving to New York or San Francisco today without spending months looking for an apartment and years living in cramped, almost unlivable quarters. Over the past two decades, New York has lost 80 percent of its Fortune 500 headquarters. Companies found it impossible to persuade employees to move to New York because of housing shortages.

The odd thing is that, through all the stumbling and bumbling of the last six months, Pataki and Bruno had ended up facing what may have been the best of all solutions—overnight decontrol. Boston just did it and is already experiencing a building boom that will alleviate its rent-control-induced housing shortages. A three-to-five-year phase-out would have been preferable, but given Silver's intransigence, the plum of overnight deregulation was there for the picking.

Instead, New York continues its drift away from mainland America and toward France. Unemployment rates are at a European-style 10 percent while the rest of the nation has dropped below 5 percent for the first time since 1973. New York City has spent $10 billion on housing over the past decade in an effort to make up for the private investment lost because of rent control. The city spends more money to warehouse abandoned apartment houses than it spends on the New York Public Library. This tax-and-debt burden is driving away even the hardiest businesses. Ambitious young people, who have always been the lifeblood of the city, are tiring of paying three times the rent of other cities just to be near Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall.

True, Pataki had the rent-control issue thrust upon him by Bruno, who has no higher ambitions and wanted the end of rent control to be his legacy. But what's the sense of being governor if you're not going to lead? By trying to placate tenants and showing no faith in the free market, Pataki has abandoned New York to a dismal future.

William Tucker is a writer living in Brooklyn.

Same Old Slant

by Vincent Carroll

Washington journalists are generally thought to be more liberal than their colleagues in the hinterland, and the perception is understandable. If 89 percent of journalists in the nation's capital really did vote for Bill Clinton in 1992, as a survey by the Freedom Forum suggested, then they rival the Modern Language Association for uniformity of political views.

Yet it turns out that the hinterland is not so very far behind. Earlier this year, the American Society of Newspaper Editors released a survey of newspaper journalists that not only confirmed their liberal tilt, but suggested the ideological gap is growing. Indeed, compare this year's poll results with the last such, in 1988, and the conclusion is inescapable. In the earlier poll, 22 percent of newsroom employees still identified themselves as conservative/Republican or leaning in that direction. By 1996, that percentage had collapsed to 15. Liberal/Democrats and those leaning their way meanwhile hardly changed: They constituted 62 percent of newsrooms in 1988 and 61 percent eight years later.

Taken at face value, the most recent figures translate into terribly lopsided newsrooms—four liberals for every conservative. It so happens, however, that the imbalance is even worse at papers with circulations of more than 50,000. There, 65 percent of employees declared themselves liberal/Democrat versus a mere 12 percent conservative/Republican, for a ratio of 5.4 to 1. To put it another way, roughly one out of 10 newsroom employees at medium and large papers is likely to share the political orientation of the majority party in the 105th Congress, while six or seven of those same 10 employees are likely to share the views of the congressional opposition.

And that probably understates the tilt. For professional reasons, many journalists resist making political declarations, presumably even to pollsters. Yet anyone

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who spends much time in America's newsrooms cannot help noticing how many journalists who label themselves "independent" in fact espouse opinions compatible with the left. In short, it is hard to believe that the liberal contingent in many large newsrooms is not 70 percent or more.

The ASNE survey report—"The newspaper journalists of the '90s," by Prof. Paul S. Voakes of the Indiana University School of Journalism—reflects answers from 1,037 journalists questioned last fall. And although the report is forthright about the predominance of liberals, nowhere in the 60-page document does that fact evoke concern. Instead, all desire to remake newsrooms is lavished on the goal of boosting the percentages of women and minorities—whose numbers actually have been on the rise. (One example: 50 percent of the surveyed journalists under 30 were women.) "Lavished" may even understate the attention to ethnic diversity, since the survey findings are followed by the reactions of no fewer than five representatives of minority interest groups (the national associations of black, Asian-American, African-American, Hispanic, and gay and lesbian journalists). Then it's the turn of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*'s Gene Foreman, chair of ASNE's Human Resources Committee. His "Messages for Managers" offers suggestions on everything from despondent copy editors to repetitive stress syndrome—as well as more on the "commitment to diversity"—but nary a word about monochromatic newsroom politics.

To a point, this silence is understandable. The pool of applicants at most papers these days is not exactly teeming with conservatives. What is a poor editor to do? If he publicly worries about the ideological imbalance, he undermines the credibility of his own product. He also feeds the hostility of unsophisticated readers—and there are droves of them—who perceive bias and conspiracy in the placement of every photo and in routine coverage of legitimate stories. Silence, then, is only prudent. It is the active denials of any cause for concern that are galling.

One of the more comprehensive denials—"Liberal reporters, yes, liberal slant no!"—was published this year by ASNE itself, in the *American Editor*. Its author, Everette Dennis, pulls out every chestnut on behalf of a position that is implausible on its face: The collective political orientation of journalists in no way affects their work.

Press critics, Dennis writes, "ignore the political predilections of publishers and media owners, which have always been overwhelmingly conservative. They ignore the tilt of newspaper editorial endorsements, which frequently favor Republican candidates. . . . They ignore the influence of market forces, which serve as a natural check on journalistic partisanship. They ignore the professional principles to which credible journalists subscribe. They ignore the astonishing diversity of the American press. And, perhaps most importantly, they ignore the conspicuous paucity of research demonstrating a pervasive bias in news content."

In fact, thoughtful press critics ignore none of these things. They know that bias is hard to quantify and that good journalists of whatever background try to be fair. Good historians also try to be fair; they too strive to maintain certain professional standards. Yet would anyone seriously argue that historians' political and social views have nothing to do with the sorts of questions they choose to research?

For that matter, far from ignoring the "astonishing diversity of the American press," the critics celebrate it—so much so that they often exaggerate the agenda-setting reach of alternative media such as talk radio. And as for Dennis's curious implication that publishers and owners micromanage newsrooms, perhaps this Freedom Forum scholar should spend more time in them and see for himself.

He might also wish to read a few more of the nation's editorial pages. Although a majority of newspapers do usually endorse the Republican presidential candidate, that fact says very little about the editorial philosophies of most large dailies. Four of this nation's five largest newspapers have liberal editorial pages, and left-leaning editorial staffs predominate through at least the top 100 papers (by which point markets are the size of Lexington, Ky., and Worcester, Mass.). The ASNE survey itself attests to liberal dominance among editorial writers: Nearly twice as many declare themselves liberal/Democratic or leaning that way as declare the alternative (45 percent to 23 percent).

Finally, Dennis's suggestion that the popularity of conservatives on op-ed pages and in talk radio disproves the charge of a liberal media slant itself hardly merits refuting. Most Americans, of course, get their news from print and broadcast reporters and anchors, not from George Will or Rush Limbaugh.

Perhaps this realization accounts for the remarkable reaction of Stan Tiner to the ASNE poll results. Tiner is the editor of the *Mobile Register*, and in the same issue of the *American Editor* in which Dennis's argument appears, Tiner recommends that journalists swear off answering such surveys, "the results of which are to subject my colleagues and me to the pain of public pillory." Let's stonewall, in other words, rather than submit to full disclosure and public debate.

Over time, the tactic might even work. Meanwhile, the poll results speak for themselves.

Vincent Carroll's piece on the obituaries of Allen Ginsberg ran in our April 21 issue.

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No Confidence

How Newt Gingrich's Congressional Lieutenants Have Begun to Turn on Him

By Fred Barnes

One by one, House Republican leaders signaled support for Speaker Newt Gingrich last week after the traumatic GOP surrender on the disaster relief bill. Majority leader Dick Armey appeared at Gingrich's side at a press briefing. Whip Tom DeLay declared that, despite threats of rebellion in the ranks, Gingrich "doesn't have a problem. He has incredible strengths that far outweigh his weaknesses." When asked about Gingrich, GOP conference chairman John Boehner voiced his firm backing. And Bill Paxon, who runs the Republican leadership meetings, repeated his mantra that Gingrich will be speaker for as long as he wants. The impression was Gingrich had cracked the whip and, for now, brought senior Republicans who had been upset with him back into the fold.

Don't believe it.

The GOP leaders themselves don't. Like many rank-and-file members, Armey, DeLay, Boehner, and Paxon are all fed up with Gingrich, and they aren't just exasperated with the speaker's erratic, insular leadership. Over the past six months, Gingrich has deeply alienated each of his deputies by his decisionmaking and his behavior toward them. Even Boehner and Paxon, former Gingrich acolytes who owe their positions of power solely to him, have lost faith in his ability to lead.

Boehner, the first to bolt, is bitter because Gingrich has blamed him for failing to distill a crisp, popular GOP message. Paxon is disillusioned by Gingrich's lack of discipline and loyalty, particularly the way he has undercut Armey, his chief lieutenant. Paxon was outraged that Gingrich overruled Armey and allowed a floor vote on May 21 on a highway spending bill that, if successful, would have blown up the budget deal with President Clinton. It lost by only two votes.

Though it is highly unlikely that Gingrich's men will attempt a coup in the midst of a struggle with the White House over spending and taxes, they are desperate for Gingrich to step down, the sooner the better. Their worst fear is that he will linger as speaker through the summer, then drag them down with him should Republican members revolt against his leadership at the end of the congressional session this fall and depose him. Given Gingrich's unpopularity, the four leaders believe it unlikely that a majority of House Republicans will want him as their honcho and spokesman in 1998. "If Newt were popular now, would this be going on?" says Rep. David McIntosh of Indiana, who represents House sophomores in leadership meetings. "No." Gingrich is the most disliked politician in America, and there's no sign that his numbers are improving.

NONE OF THE SPEAKER'S TOP COLLEAGUES BELIEVES HE HAS A PRAYER OF SURVIVING IN THAT POSITION PAST 1998.

None of Gingrich's top colleagues believes he has a prayer of surviving as speaker past 1998. Gingrich disagrees. "Odds are very high," he told me, that he'll be speaker in 1999 and beyond. Gingrich even argues that the turmoil over the disaster-relief bill—Republicans noisily flubbed an effort to force Clinton to accept two GOP amendments—was "useful." It had the effect of "putting cold water in your face and saying we need to restructure."

Asked if criticism of his unsteadiness in pursuing a consistent message was fair, Gingrich said: "Sure." So he's prepared to "listen a little more to the members." His strategy is to court rebellious younger Republicans like Mark Souder of Indiana and Mark Neumann of

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Wisconsin in an attempt to divide and conquer House dissidents. He's also met with Joe Scarborough of Florida and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, who were the ringleaders of a group that held an anti-Newt gripe session at the Capitol on June 17.

When Gingrich showed up earlier on June 17 for the first gathering of House Republicans since the debacle over disaster aid, he immediately changed the subject. He tried to sound like the old Gingrich, a man with a plan. For the next few weeks, he said, the message would be balancing the budget, saving Medicare, and cutting taxes—nothing else. By sticking to that, instead of flitting from issue to issue, Republicans would get the upper hand with Clinton. Two days later, though, the plan veered off track when Gingrich decided to stick with a scheduled floor vote on extending most-favored-nation status for China. A few hours before, he had been leaning the other way; he agreed with Gary Bauer of the Family Research Council that it would be a mistake to debate the rancorous MFN issue, which badly splits Republicans, before the July 4 recess. Then pro-MFN business groups muscled Gingrich and he knuckled under. The MFN vote is slated for June 23—in the middle of a week that was supposed to unite the Republicans on taxes.

Dissatisfaction with Gingrich reaches far beyond his four senior colleagues. Christopher Cox of California, the chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee, has been grousing about Gingrich for months, insisting he's not a real conservative. McIntosh says "it was the decision to compromise at the beginning of this term rather than push for our agenda" that soured him on Gingrich. Jim Nussle of Iowa, another one-time Gingrich disciple, has tired of the speaker's inability to stick to a single message. He (and others) also expected Gingrich to make Nussle head of the House Republican Campaign Committee. Instead, Gingrich picked a Georgia ally, John Linder. Now, Nussle is running as the anti-Gingrich candidate to replace outgoing representative Susan Molinari as vice chairman of the Republican conference.

Some rank-and-file discontent within the majority party is normal. What is unusual—and far more significant—is the deep distrust of the party leader by his closest colleagues in the leadership. For public consumption, of course, GOP leaders say there's no serious disunity. In a written statement denying that he had refused to defend Gingrich at a press conference on June 17, Armey said he and the speaker "continue to work as effectively together as we have for the last 4 years." That was hardly a ringing endorsement, but it wasn't meant to be believed by reporters anyway. The statement said Armey hadn't spoken up for Gingrich in answer to a question because he "was halfway out the door with my back turned." This wasn't true, as reporters were well aware. Armey had been rising from his seat and was still making eye contact with reporters when he was asked if he thought Gingrich was doing an effective job. "You all have a good day now," Armey responded. All he had to say was yes, and there would have been no story. He didn't, intentionally.

What was Armey up to? He wasn't just zinging Gingrich for the way the speaker scapegoated him at a June 12 meeting for the disaster-bill fiasco. Armey "sent a message back to Gingrich that enough is enough," an associate says; there is to be no more jerking Armey around, blaming him, overruling him, not consulting him. Armey buttressed the message by declining three other opportunities at the press conference to defend Gingrich. And he spoke kindly of a planned gathering of anti-Newt dissidents. "To sit down and think it through and plan out how you are going to move forward, I think, is always a very useful thing," he said.

What's more, he and whip Tom DeLay met with two dozen House conservatives on June 11 and all but encouraged them to raise Cain on the House floor. At least that's how the dissidents understood it. DeLay says they "heard what they wanted to hear." All he and Armey were doing, DeLay explained later, was spelling out options; one option just happened to be creating chaos on the floor to block spending bills they don't like.

Months before Armey and DeLay, Boehner gave up on Gingrich. (Proud of being a team player, he continued to defend Gingrich publicly.) "He pretty much checked out" in January, another member of the leadership says. The precipitating event was Gingrich's decision after last fall's election to yank responsibility for "communications" from Boehner and centralize it in his own office. Boehner agreed it should be centralized—you know, all GOP press secretaries working in sync—but in the House Republican Conference, which Boehner chairs. He not only lost the argument, he suffered a worse fate: Gingrich never announced the shift, and so, when things went bad, Boehner remained the butt of complaints about poor communications. He felt Gingrich was deflecting blame on him, and Gingrich was.

Boehner's falling out with Gingrich culminated a year of growing discontent. Elected in 1990 from the suburbs of Cincinnati, Boehner caught Gingrich's eye early on. After Republicans captured the House in 1994, Gingrich engineered Boehner's election as conference chairman, the fourth-ranking post in the GOP hierarchy. He managed this by promising to install

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Boehner's chief rival, Bob Livingston of Louisiana, as chairman of the appropriations committee. Besides running the conference, Boehner would work with interest groups in the GOP coalition and handle communications.

There was one problem. Gingrich himself did most of the communicating, often in what a Boehner aide calls "brain farts." As Republican popularity sank in late 1995—after the government shutdown and Gingrich's whining about leaving Air Force One by the back door—the speaker wouldn't take the rap. There were leaked complaints about shortcomings of Boehner's shop. Then, in January 1996, Gingrich told the *Hill*, a Capitol Hill weekly, that he would put House Budget Committee chairman John Kasich in charge of communications. Boehner learned of this when he read about it. Confronting Gingrich as they stood on the balcony outside the speaker's office, Boehner insisted he had always been a team player. "This is unfair," he said. Gingrich backed down, but Boehner's confidence in him was shaken, only to be finally shattered a year later.

Like Boehner, Paxon was groomed by Gingrich for a leadership position. He was elected in 1988 from Jack Kemp's old district in upstate New York. Four years later, Gingrich put him in charge of the Republican campaign committee, a critical job. After Republicans won the House in 1994 and kept control in 1996, Gingrich elevated Paxon to chairman of the leadership meetings. Swiftly, Paxon began to gag on some of Gingrich's decisions. The one that rankled most was Gingrich's capitulation in April to Bud Shuster of Pennsylvania, the pork-mad chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Shuster first approached Armey with his scheme to bring a $32 billion highway bill to the floor. Armey said no way; the bill would bust the budget agreement. Shuster appealed to Gingrich, who had supposedly left day-to-day matters like this to Armey. Without consulting Armey, Gingrich acceded to Shuster.

Paxon was appalled. He thought Gingrich should have stuck by Armey and should have told Shuster: Try to bring that bill to the floor and I'll oust you as chairman. That wasn't feasible, Gingrich told me. Shuster would have been "stronger if we'd tried to stiff him." He'd have gotten his bill to the floor anyway and perhaps won. Paxon doubts that. Besides, Shuster could have been promised increased highway spending later. "Reasonable people can look back at that" and reach different conclusions, Gingrich says. Shuster lost 216-214 on May 21, but only after a herculean lobbying effort by Armey and DeLay. Had Shuster won, DeLay said, the consequences would have been dire. "It would have blown the budget agreement to shreds," he said. "It would have shown we couldn't keep our word. We'd have gotten a terrible black eye." All this was averted, no thanks to Gingrich. But Paxon hasn't felt the same about the speaker since.

PAXON WAS APPALLED. HE THOUGHT GINGRICH SHOULD HAVE STUCK BY ARMEY AND TOLD SHUSTER NOT TO BRING HIS BILL UP.

The disaster-relief bill produced the final fracture in Armey and DeLay's already tortured relationship with Gingrich. On June 12, Gingrich abruptly announced at a meeting of the GOP conference that a deal had been worked out with Clinton. Actually, it was a total capitulation. Neither rider Republicans had attached to the bill—one to keep the government from shutting down this fall, the other to block census "sampling"—had survived. None of the other leaders had been consulted or even informed of the deal. "Everybody was left out of the loop," says a GOP leader. "Newt did this entirely on his own, entirely." Worse, Gingrich blithely explained to the conference that he shouldn't have delegated so much during the flap over the bill. This infuriated Armey, among others. By suggesting he'd been largely uninvolved, Gingrich gave himself an alibi and steered blame to Armey. Later that day, Armey, DeLay, Boehner, and Paxon voted against the bill in a spontaneous repudiation of Gingrich.

Had Gingrich really been uninvolved in the day to day disaster-relief bill? His four colleagues don't think so. According to their version of events, Gingrich signed off from the beginning on adding the two amendments. True, he expressed doubts about this strategy. But he didn't try to block it. On May 20, he went along with a backup plan to drop the government shutdown provision, which Clinton had attacked, but retain the ban on census sampling. On May 21, he sought to get both provisions dropped, but Armey refused. Gingrich relented. On May 22, Gingrich again

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advocated dropping the provisions at a leadership meeting, and once more backed down. However, just before that meeting, he told the Associated Press that Republicans were willing to drop both amendments, hardly an effective negotiating ploy. And at one point, Gingrich vowed to send the bill to the White House before the Memorial Day recess. That never happened. On June 10, Gingrich agreed to a new strategy of sending Clinton a slimmed down bill ($2 billion or $3 billion, not $8 billion) with only the census amendment tacked on. Finally, at the June 12 conference, he suddenly announced full surrender. His explanation: "If you are losing, it's good to stop. It's a useful principle." I asked Gingrich who had actually negotiated the truce with the White House. He didn't answer. DeLay says he doesn't know either, but would like to. He hasn't raised the matter with Gingrich.

Can Gingrich recover? Not by blaming the press for the disaster-relief fiasco. Gingrich insisted the media coverage was "a case study in the sociology of panic. This entire flap has been a news media overreaction to an exaggerated report of an anonymous event that didn't occur." But there isn't a single GOP leader aside from Newt who primarily faults the press in this case.

Gingrich's last best chance—not of recovering, but merely surviving—may be taxes, the fundamental conservative issue. If he preserves a conservative tax cut, he survives. But if Republicans think he's caved in to Clinton, he's gone. That's also what GOP leaders think. "If it's perceived Newt gives in on that, both the base and the members will say the leadership has to change," McIntosh says. Gingrich claims he has no intention of dealing away any major provisions. What bothers Armey, DeLay, Boehner, and Paxon is that this is what Gingrich always says. ♦

The Handcuffed Republicans

By John Podhoretz

After Senate majority leader Trent Lott took the occasion of his appearance on ABC's *This Week* to issue one of the more pointed criticisms ever aimed at a president of the United States—"He acts like a spoiled brat. He thinks he's got to have it his way or no way"—Bill Clinton took remarkably little offense. "That's probably a lot nicer than some of the things he could have said," the president told the *Wall Street Journal* a few days later. "I think he's getting a little bit of a bum rap right now."

Clinton likes being attacked about as much as anybody does, which is to say, not at all. It is therefore worth wondering why he was so generous about Lott's outburst. There are two possible explanations. First, it could be he understands that Lott made himself look bad and that, by being gracious, Clinton can appear the better man. Perhaps, but that would be uncharacteristic of the president; it has long been his habit to respond to Republican criticisms with withering sarcasm.

But there's a deeper reason for Clinton's magnanimity. I think he heard two things in Lott's voice: a petulant acknowledgment of Clinton's primacy in American politics, and a dawning realization of just how bad things may be for the Republicans on Capitol Hill in the coming months. If you thought the spring was bad for Republicans, wait until the summer.

Throughout the spring, almost everything the Republicans have tried to do on Capitol Hill has gone wrong. When it came to legislation on disaster aid, the GOP managed to take two responsible legislative notions—one to prevent another government shutdown and another to bar the use of sampling in the 2000 census—and make them appear cravenly partisan. This put Clinton in the remarkable position of complaining that money wasn't getting to the victims quickly enough—"Americans in need should not have to endure this unnecessary delay!"—even as he vetoed the legislation that would have gotten the money to them quickly.

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In other words, Clinton and the Democrats won every which way. They got the bill they wanted and made Republicans look unfeeling and uninterested in doing the nation's good work even as they voted for a bill without the shutdown and census provisions. And worse for the *amour propre* of the Republican leadership, Clinton made them look astoundingly incompetent. After all, nothing is more depressing for a politician who fancies himself a good poker player than getting wiped out at the table.

Lott issued the standard Republican mea culpa. "If we do a better job getting the message out," he said on *This Week*, "if we can say it in a way that the media will actually cover it, which didn't happen, you know, I think we can win the battle with it." The deafening echo you hear is of George Bush, circa 1992. Bush and his men were also convinced that his consistent inability to get over 40 percent in the polls was really due to a failure of "getting the message out" in large measure because the media refused to "actually cover it."

But just as George Bush really had no "message," neither did Trent Lott in the course of the disaster-relief bill. What was the Republican "message"? What battle were they trying to win, exactly? Were they trying to prove that the Republican majority, like Democrats of the past, could force the president of an opposing party to sign things into law he disapproved of by attaching them to major legislation he desperately wanted? Did the question of how to conduct the 2000 census really have to be resolved at this moment?

No, it didn't. And anyway, the census was by far the lesser of the two riders that led Clinton to veto the bill. The important rider was the one preventing another government shutdown, and the Republicans wanted it not because they wanted to "win the battle" but because they want some insurance against a collapse of the balanced-budget deal they struck with Bill Clinton just weeks ago. Indeed, the very fact that Clinton reacted so violently to the no-shutdown provision is probably what brought Trent Lott's ire to the fore. Because the question that is being asked by Republicans all over Capitol Hill in the wake of Clinton's veto and the stripping of the no-shutdown provision from the disaster-aid bill he did sign, is this: *Is he going to do it to us again*?

The answer clearly is, *Yes, if he can*. Why shouldn't he? In the late fall of 1995, Bill Clinton vetoed appropriations bill after appropriations bill, thus shutting the government down—and the Republicans got blamed for it. The shutdown saved Clinton's political career, made him look like a statesman, and brought Republican revolutionary fervor to an abrupt and depressing end.

It is hard to overstate the crisis of Republican confidence created by the 1995 shutdown strategy. Ever since, Republicans have suffered from a Beltway version of post-traumatic stress disorder—every time they think of making a move, they flash back to the mounting despair and fear they felt as the nation turned against them even though they knew, and Clinton knew, that the shutdown was *his* fault. By confronting the president directly, they came close to losing their majority.

CLINTON AND THE DEMOCRATS WON EVERY WHICH WAY. THEY GOT THE BILL THEY WANTED AND MADE REPUBLICANS LOOK UNFEELING.

They spent most of 1995 treating the president with contempt; after the shutdown, Republicans began to fear him. As their hopes for a crippling blow to the Clinton presidency first from the Whitewater scandals and then from the Asian-money scandals continued to go unfulfilled, they knew they had to deal with a president who has shown a marked lack of good faith in dealing with them—or with anyone, for that matter.

So, in 1997, Republican leaders decided to take a different tack. Instead of fighting Clinton, they would join him. Literally. They sought to link their party's political fate to the president's; the balanced-budget deal would give Clinton and the Republicans a common goal, promise them a common triumph, and force them to face equal blame were the deal to fall apart. And since a final agreement would take the federal budget off the negotiating table for the rest of the Clinton presidency, they would never again have to face Clinton down over an appropriations bill. In essence, they handcuffed themselves to Bill Clinton to make his much-discussed desire for a "place in history" contingent on them.

But Bill Clinton is the Houdini of American politics. He has wriggled himself out of the various straitjackets the GOP has attempted to wrap around him

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since the Republican takeover of Congress in 1995, and now he has slipped free of the handcuffs. Indeed, he has had the unique pleasure of standing by and watching as Lott and his fellow Republicans, still in those handcuffs, placed themselves in a locked box and had the box thrown into the Potomac, all without a clue as to how to escape before the air runs out.

The box they are trapped in is the budget deal itself. Clinton has made it clear, through his conduct on the disaster-relief bill, that if he sees a political opportunity opening up on the budget-deal horizon, he will take it. And he seems to have decided that the tax-cut package the Republicans send him will present that precise political opportunity.

By agreeing to tax cuts in the outline of the balanced-budget deal, Clinton altered the dynamic of the discussion in his favor for the first time in his presidency. Republicans spent three years beating Clinton up for reneging on his promise of a middle-class tax cut, and those attacks surely had something to do with the overwhelming mandate they received in the 1994 congressional elections.

But now Clinton is for tax cuts, just as the Republicans are for tax cuts. So the discussion becomes *which* tax cuts are best for the country. This is very tricky for Republicans, and very uncomplicated for Clinton. He is that rarest of all birds, a Democrat with a substantial tax-cut package, and though there is every reason to be suspicious of his ideological commitment to tax-cutting, there is no gainsaying the fact that he has a plan on the table.

The Republican plan is, to be kind, a jury-rigged thing carved from 15 years' worth of good but often contradictory conservative public-policy ideas about the appropriate role of government. And because the very nature of pro-growth tax cuts is that they favor those who pay more in taxes, the Republican plan does skew toward the very well-off and the rich. When liberal Democrats used to attack the GOP for a tax-cut plan favoring the rich, they could be dismissed because they didn't believe in tax cuts for anybody. But Clinton is now on record with a jury-rigged mess of his own, carved from 15 years' worth of bad neoliberal public-policy ideas about ways of helping the poor and the education-starved. And because the nature of his tax cuts is about "targeting" (i.e., handing out) money to specific kinds, classes, and ages of people, it does *not* skew toward the rich.

This makes Clinton the ideal critic of the Republican tax plan, just as it will make him the ideal critic of every Republican appropriations bill that he will have to sign in order to make the balanced-budget deal a reality. What if he were to decide to veto the Republican tax bill? Or one of the appropriations bills? The theory of the Republican let's-chain-ourselves-to-Clinton strategy was that if he were to do so, he would void the budget deal and have to suffer the consequences.

But now he has shown that he learned a different lesson from the government shutdown. The GOP thought the lesson was that they needed to deal with Clinton by bringing him close. They seem to have forgotten that they spent weeks negotiating over the appropriations bills back in 1995 and kept finding that the president would tell them one thing in private and then send his people out to contradict him in public.

By making the Republicans appear divided, partisan, mingy, and opportunistic on the disaster-relief bill, Clinton has set the stage for a replay of late 1995. He will spend the summer threatening the GOP with 1995 again and again. Their tax cuts? Irresponsible, unworkable, unfair. They'd better come a lot closer to his if he is going to sign. A plan to cut the funding of a federal agency as part of a larger appropriations bill? He won't stand for it.

And what will the Republicans do, faced with this act? That is the box they have placed themselves in: They have little or no maneuvering room. They can rightly say they are being betrayed and walk away from the deal, which would allow Clinton to say the Republican party has decided to hold partisanship higher than a balanced budget. Or they can accede to Clinton. This puts them in an equally uncomfortable position, because if they cave in to him on taxes, then what will happen with each individual appropriations bill? Until every one of them is signed, they will have to face the president down in a staring contest, and since they have blinked in every such contest since Bob Dole ended the shutdown at the beginning of 1996, there's no reason to think they won't blink now—especially since Clinton can, yet again, hold the government shutdown over them like the sword of Damocles.

The Republicans have maneuvered themselves into a junior partnership with the president of the United States, but there might be a way out. That is to pursue a strategy of simplicity. There is chaos on Capitol Hill because the Republicans behave chaotically, shifting strategies and themes and attacks every few days and doing far too much at once. They have to isolate their own criticisms of Clinton, come together as a party, and read off the same sheet day in and day out. Only by acting disciplined and tough can they acquire discipline and toughness.

At the end of last week, Newt Gingrich and Republican National Committee chairman James Nicholson

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unveiled what could be the first successful counterattack against the Clinton tax plan and the way it handles the $500-per-child tax credit. Clinton wants lower-income Americans with children to get cash from the government for their children even if their household pays nothing in taxes. This does not lower taxes. Rather, it turns a tax cut into a direct government cash payment. "That's welfare," Newt Gingrich said at a news conference, and besides the fact that it's true, it also hits Clinton in the soft Democratic underbelly.

Clinton may have overreached here, and the Republican assault may land some blows and shake up the political dynamic—but only if the GOP is as relentless about it as the Democrats were in hammering home the image of a Republican party keeping victims of the Red River flood homeless and hungry. If they do this, and make Clinton's strategy against them riskier and costlier, then he may be more accommodating.

The president is not a spoiled brat. He is a political contortionist at the very peak of his powers, and the price of dealing with him poorly in 1997 could be higher than Republicans now imagine. In the summer of 1993, Bill Clinton's vaunted economic stimulus package collapsed and the Democratic party in the House began dissolving into the sorts of recriminations and backbiting we've seen from Republicans in the last few weeks. That was the moment at which the Republican victory in 1994 began to take shape. If the Lott-Gingrich Congress continues on its present path, November 1998 could end the Republican revolution for good. ♦

The Canary in the Chinese Coal Mine

By Robert Kagan

Constructive engagement, as the Clinton administration likes to call its policy toward China, is actually more a theory than a strategy. And it is a theory that demands perpetual optimism. It runs something like this: China has a clear set of interests—in expanding its economic growth, in preserving an open door to international trade and investment, in maintaining tranquility at home and peace abroad. These interests, in turn, impose certain requirements on Chinese domestic and foreign policies. To compete effectively in the world's economy requires that China's leaders learn to behave according to internationally established norms and rules, in both external and internal matters. They must sign and abide by international agreements; they must become responsible members of the international community; and, if China's economic prosperity is to continue, they must gradually loosen the controls on free expression and political organization in their country.

Since any other course is contrary to China's interests, as defined by proponents of the engagement theory, Chinese leaders can ultimately be counted on to do the right thing. Obstreperous international behavior or violent repression at home would only lead to China's isolation, which would strain vital trade ties with the rest of the world, retard economic growth, and produce a hostile encirclement of China by fearful but well-armed states. China's leaders cannot possibly want to pursue a course so damaging to their interests.

It is upon this theory that the Clinton administration's policy toward China is based. With all the forces of global economic integration leading the Chinese naturally toward the very goals we seek for them, goals that, happily, are compatible with our own interests, the task for the United States is merely to educate the Chinese to understand their interests better, to show them the fruits that await if they will only do what's right, and otherwise to make as little trouble for them as possible.

There could be no better test of this theory than the fate of Hong Kong—a canary in the coal mine whose survival or demise will tell us much about the level of poisons in Chinese air. If Chinese leaders share our view of their interests, they have every reason to behave themselves as they assume control of the for-

Contributing editor Robert Kagan's article "What China Knows that We Don't" ran in our January 20 issue.

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mer British colony. As national security adviser Samuel Berger recently put it, "Living up to [its] pledge is as much in China's interest as it is in Hong Kong's." First of all, "a dynamic, prosperous, and free Hong Kong will continue to drive growth and progress in China." China, as it is so often said, will not want to kill the goose that lays such golden eggs. And Chinese leaders must recognize that preserving a significant measure of political freedom in Hong Kong is essential to keeping that incomparable international trading center vibrant and adaptable. If they don't seem quite to understand this, we can help explain it to them—as treasury secretary Robert Rubin and his deputy, Lawrence Summers, have patiently tried to do on several occasions.

IN THE COURSE OF A SINGLE YEAR, THE STRATEGIC RATIONALE FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN CHINA AND THE WEST DISAPPEARED.

There are other sound reasons for China to apply a soft touch in Hong Kong. A China seeking the peaceful reintegration of Taiwan will not take over Hong Kong in such a heavy-handed way as to frighten the Taiwanese away from ever accepting union with the mainland. In addition, successful trading relationships with other nations require a reputation for adhering to international agreements, which gives the Chinese a powerful incentive to hew to the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong, which established the terms of this month's transfer. As Berger recently put it, "the world is watching. A smooth reversion will promote China's international prestige—but handled badly, the transition will tarnish China."

It all seems quite reasonable, in theory. So what do we make of the fact that, in reality, China has *not* been behaving itself in Hong Kong? That is a conundrum for which the advocates of engagement unfortunately have no answer—and no policy.

The facts are plain enough. In the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984, China promised to respect Hong Kong's autonomy, to abide by a policy of "one country, two systems." This in turn meant that Hong Kong's residents could govern themselves as a Special Administrative Region of China with full freedom to act independently in all matters except foreign and defense policy. According to the specific terms of the declaration and its annexes, Beijing would appoint Hong Kong's chief executive, but that executive was to be accountable to a legislative council chosen in free elections by the people of Hong Kong. Hong Kong's British legal system was to remain unchanged, its magistrates allowed to interpret Hong Kong laws free from interference by the mainland. Criminal prosecutions and maintenance of public order were to be matters exclusively under the province of local leaders. The full range of individual liberties, from freedom of the press to the right of peaceful assembly, was guaranteed. In keeping with the provisions of the Joint Declaration, the British governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, called elections for the Legislative Council in 1995. The result was a sweeping victory by the Democratic party led by the prominent barrister Martin Lee.

The negotiations between Great Britain and China took place in a world very different from today's, of course. In the 1980s, China was still a strategic ally of the West against their common enemy, the Soviet Union. China itself was in the early stages of a dramatic economic opening to the West and in the full throes of a reform campaign led by Deng Xiaoping and his moderate, pro-Western lieutenant, Zhao Ziyang. The surprisingly favorable terms for Hong Kong negotiated by China seemed to fit well within Deng's overall strategy of greater cooperation with the West. When Britain's prime minister Margaret Thatcher agreed to the Joint Declaration, the prevailing assumption in London and in Washington was that Deng's China, not Chernenko's Soviet Union, would be the first Communist giant to shake off totalitarian rule and embrace democratic capitalism.

That world, and those assumptions, were exploded in 1989. The Berlin Wall came down, and with it the Soviet Empire. And just as reform was blossoming in Moscow, it was collapsing in Beijing. In June 1989 Chinese leaders sent troops and tanks into Tiananmen Square to crush the democracy movement which Deng's reforms had brought to life. Deng personally approved the use of force against Chinese students, and he subsequently purged Zhao Ziyang and made common cause with hard-liners in the Chinese politburo and military leadership. In the course of a single year, the strategic rationale for close cooperation between China and the West disappeared, and China's leaders began to view domestic pressures for political reform not as a tolerable byproduct of economic growth but as part of a Western plot to bring them down. In this new context, the idea of an autonomous, democratic Hong Kong incorporated into China looked to the Chinese leadership like a potentially deadly threat to the dictatorship they wished to maintain.

Soon after the Tiananmen Square massacre, therefore, the new harder-line Chinese leadership began to

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look for an escape from the terms of the Joint Declaration. And they found one. The British negotiators of the declaration, in the mood of careless optimism about Chinese intentions that prevailed in the early 1980s, had agreed to let Beijing, not Hong Kong, draft the Basic Law incorporating the terms of the declaration into Hong Kong law. In 1990 the Chinese government seized on the opportunity to use the Basic Law to transform the Declaration's original meaning.

The Basic Law approved by the National People's Congress in April 1990 eviscerated the Joint Declaration's commitment to allow Hong Kong a democratically elected Legislative Council. Beijing insisted that no more than half of the legislature's members could be chosen by direct election. The new Basic Law also gave final say over the interpretation of Hong Kong's laws to Beijing, thus undermining the independence of Hong Kong's courts. Article 23 of the Basic Law called for prohibitions on "any act of treason, secession, sedition, or subversion against the Central People's Government," which sounds reasonable enough unless one understands that, for the Beijing government, any criticism of the government falls under those categories.

It will come as no surprise that the Bush administration, which invented the current strategy of engagement with China, raised little objection to the way the Chinese had rewritten the Joint Declaration to impose their rule on the people of Hong Kong. Bush and Co. argued that it was not for the United States to interpret an agreement between two sovereign nations. And it will also surprise no one that the British government was too timid to protest, and that when it came to making good on its guarantees to the people of Hong Kong, Albion proved to be perfidious.

All of which brings us to the events of the past year. In December, a committee appointed by Beijing chose a new Provisional Legislature without any pretense of an election. In fact, 15 members of the new 60-person Provisional Legislature had lost in the free and fair 1995 elections. Even the queasy British government protested this clear violation of the Joint Declaration. Nevertheless, when Hong Kong falls into Chinese hands next week, the Beijing-backed Provisional Legislature will replace the popularly elected Legislative Council. Martin Lee's Democratic party, which won a plurality of seats in 1995, will be shut out.

Since the beginning of 1997, Beijing and the man it appointed to be Hong Kong's chief executive, C. H. Tung, have been rewriting Hong Kong's laws to put new restrictions on political activity and free speech. Tung has instituted changes that will severely curtail press freedoms and the ability of opposition political parties to function. According to the *Economist*, the new rules "would allow political groups and protests to be banned" under the catchall justification of "national security." One Hong Kong group that openly supports "patriotic democratic movements" in China has already been labeled "subversive" by the Chinese government and is unlikely to survive the transition. Even optimistic observers of the transition in Hong Kong acknowledge that the press has begun to censor itself in anticipation of China's takeover. Frank Ching of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* reports that such self-censorship is "already pervasive." And it will only get worse when news laws banning editorial stances that threaten "national security" go into effect. Meanwhile, the new rules will also prohibit political parties from receiving assistance from or maintaining contact with foreign entities. This means that after June 30 a visit by Martin Lee to the White House, like the one he made a few weeks ago, will be sufficient grounds for outlawing his Democratic party in Hong Kong.

Even though the "world is watching," as Berger says, China is already demonstrating an impetuous disregard for the rule of law and for its international commitments. Sympathetic analysts like Ching admit that "China is creating the impression that it thinks the law is whatever it says it is," and this attitude is "worrisome and dangerous."

But, of course, it is much more than that. The evidence in Hong Kong so far suggests that the American theory of engagement is deeply flawed. It has already proven to be a bad predictor of Chinese actions and a most unreliable guide to understanding Chinese behavior. And the flaws are apparent no matter which way you look at the situation in Hong Kong.

> THAT HONG KONG'S ECONOMY CAN FLOURISH AS POLITICAL RIGHTS DISAPPEAR IS A REFUTATION OF THE THEORY OF ENGAGEMENT.

Some defenders of engagement, for instance, have pointed to the fact that in the midst of all these signs of impending political repression, Hong Kong's economy has been flourishing. The stock market has been healthy. Real-estate prices have been soaring. But the fact that Hong Kong's economy can flourish as political rights disappear is actually a refutation of the theory of engagement, not evidence of its accuracy. After all, proponents of engagement have always insisted that economic prosperity is supposed to create the

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space for political rights. It is supposed to force the Chinese government to accept political liberalization as the necessary price for economic dynamism. But if an economy controlled by China can flourish alongside declining political freedom in Hong Kong, why wouldn't this be true on the mainland as well? And if it is, then all the rosy predictions that China will become a democracy when its economic growth reaches a certain level are simply wrong. Apparently, those who point happily to the good economic performance in Hong Kong don't recognize this inconsistency in their argument.

More sober proponents of engagement, including those within the administration, stick to their thesis that Hong Kong's prosperity cannot long survive if political freedoms are curtailed, that the link between political and economic liberties really is indissoluble. But for them the experience of Hong Kong poses a different problem. For if their theory is right, what does it mean that the Chinese leadership has clearly and consistently chosen politics and power over economics since Tiananmen?

It means that Chinese leaders do not view their interests in the same way as the proponents of engagement in the United States. Indeed, the differences could not be more fundamental. The lesson of Hong Kong, as China scholar Gerald Segal has written, "is that China will regain what it believes to be its own, regardless of the risks to its economic prosperity." China's leaders since Deng have sought to spur economic growth not as an end in itself but as a means of increasing power, for themselves and for their nation. They want a healthy economy, therefore, in both Hong Kong and on the mainland, but not if the requirements of a healthy economy conflict with the requirements of power. In Hong Kong, and indeed in the aggressive behavior they showed in the Straits of Taiwan last year, they have been willing to surrender not only economic growth but also international good will to the dictates of power. Dictatorship, after all, is their business, and they know no other. As Frank Ching wrote recently in *Foreign Affairs*, "Saying that [China] will not interfere in Hong Kong's affairs is a little like a left-handed person promising to use only his right hand. The intention may be good, but before he knows it, he will start using his left hand again."

China's persistent refutation of the engagement theory in Hong Kong has left the Clinton administration bereft of a policy. Administration officials have never said what they would do if China behaved badly in Hong Kong. When things have gone worse than expected, they have only clung more tenaciously to their theory, shutting their eyes to Chinese misdeeds of the present while directing our attention ever deeper into the future in the hope that the Chinese will eventually vindicate their faith. Earlier this month, Berger warned Americans not to "prejudge the outcome" of events in Hong Kong. As if nothing had happened these past few years to raise doubts about China's adherence to its agreement with Great Britain, Berger declared that the "international community has a right to expect . . . that China adheres to the letter and the spirit of the Joint Declaration." Without a word about the illegitimate, Beijing-appointed Provisional Legislature, Berger asked his audience to "look to see if elections for [a] new legislature are set soon and held freely." (At least Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has refused to be present at the swearing-in of the Provisional Legislature on July 1.) Without a hint that press freedoms and political rights have already begun to vanish in Hong Kong, Berger suggested that we watch carefully to see "if freedom of speech, press, religion and association are maintained."

The Hong Kong canary is already short of breath as the PRC coal mine closes in around it. By the time we wake up to find that political liberties have been extinguished, it will be too late. And what will the Clinton or Gore administration do when the death of Hong Kong becomes irrefutable? The answer, of course, is nothing. The failure of the administration's policy in Hong Kong reveals the fatal flaw at the heart of its entire approach to China. For the strategy of engagement simply has no answer to the question: What if you're wrong about China?

Indeed, administration officials and their supporters in Congress and academia dare not answer this question. Near the end of his speech on U.S.-China relations, Berger paused for a moment to warn about "the one development" that could possibly destroy Sino-American relations and "do grievous injury to the interests of the United States." Which one of the many possible dangers did Berger have in mind? you might ask. A crushing of civil liberties in Hong Kong? A Chinese invasion or blockade of Taiwan? Another Tiananmen Square massacre? Fresh evidence of a Chinese plot to subvert American elections? Well, no. Actually, Berger wasn't thinking about what *China* might do. The "one development" he feared was a vote by Congress to revoke China's most-favored-nation status. Nothing that China could do, it seems, could ever "destroy the dialogue" or "do grievous damage to the interests of the United States."

With such policies in Washington, it's hard to see why the Chinese should worry about living up to the world's high standards of behavior. They have nothing to fear from us. ♦

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Leftists in Orbit

No-Nukes Groups Target NASA

By Kenneth Silber

Environmental and antinuclear activists have found a new enemy: the space program. The Cassini space probe to Saturn, scheduled for an October 6 launch from Cape Canaveral, is the target of an impassioned campaign of protests and grassroots lobbying—a campaign marked by technological naiveté and political paranoia. If the activists succeed, they will cripple not only the Cassini mission but space exploration in general.

Cassini is one of the most ambitious projects to date in planetary science, a $3.2 billion joint venture of NASA, the European Space Agency, and the Italian Space Agency. Reaching Saturn's orbit in 2004, Cassini will spend four years in close-up observation of the ringed planet, previously explored only by fly-by probes. A smaller probe will detach from the orbiting Cassini and descend toward Saturn's moon Titan, whose atmosphere, rich in organic molecules, may provide clues to the early evolution of life on Earth.

The controversy arises from the spacecraft's use of nuclear energy to power its scientific instruments. Similar to previous deep-space missions such as the Galileo probe to Jupiter, Cassini will carry a set of special generators that take the heat given off by the natural radioactive decay of plutonium-238 and convert it to electricity. Such devices differ from nuclear reactors, which generate heat and electricity by initiating chain reactions. The spacecraft will also contain tiny heaters to protect its instruments in the cold of interplanetary space, and these, too, use the natural heat of decaying plutonium. Altogether, slightly more than 72 pounds of radioactive material will be on board.

Nuclear energy, it should be noted, is only being used as a glorified set of batteries, not as Cassini's means of propulsion. The spacecraft will be launched aboard an ordinary rocket using ordinary rocket fuel, and it will then proceed on a circuitous route through the solar system, using the gravitational "slingshot effect" as it passes Venus (twice), Earth, and Jupiter to speed it on its way to Saturn. (Without such "gravity assists," missions to the outer planets would take decades or more.)

According to Cassini's opponents, though, the mere presence of plutonium means the spacecraft could endanger the lives of millions—perhaps even billions—by spreading radioactive material in the event of an accident at launch or during the planned August 1999 fly-by of Earth. "What we are talking about here—and I use this word advisedly—is a holocaust in the making," said Karl Grossman, a State University of New York journalism professor, opening a recent presentation on Cassini at the Learning Alliance, a self-described "progressive education and organizing center" in New York's East Village.

Why would NASA do such a thing? Cassini's critics insist that the agency is ignoring viable solar-power alternatives. And that's because the nominally civilian, scientific mission to Saturn is actually a crucial step in the Pentagon's plans to develop "nuclear-powered battle stations in outer space," in the words of physicist and popular author Michio Kaku, Grossman's co-presenter at the lecture.

This bleak view is actually gaining currency beyond the leftist fever swamps of the East Village. Groups with names like Food Not Bombs and the Florida Coalition for Peace and Justice are planning "non-violent" sit-ins on the launch pad in October. Protest rallies are scheduled for September in New York and Washington, and a call-in campaign has begun that aims to periodically tie up the White House switchboard. Nor is such activity directed only at the government. At the Learning Alliance presentation, a sign-up sheet was passed around for a sit-in at the headquarters of the *New York Times*. Why? Because the establishment media have refused to cover the Cassini story. Indeed, Cassini was labeled this year's "most censored" story by a left-wing panel called Project Censored.

Thus it has been left to magazines such as the *Nation* and *Covert Action Quarterly* to spread the anti-Cassini message (not to mention the several Web sites devoted to fighting the spacecraft). Grossman, creator of a film documentary titled *Nukes in Space: The Nuclearization and Weaponization of the Heavens*, lec-

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tures widely on Cassini, sometimes accompanied by Kaku, a onetime Edward Teller protégé who now campaigns against nuclear energy and space weapons. In Florida, demonstrations against the launch have already begun.

It is tempting to dismiss the anti-Cassini movement as a product of the political fringe. But at a time of widespread public aversion toward nuclear energy, and ambivalence about esoteric and expensive "rocket science," the demonization of the "plutonium probe" just might strike a chord with politicians and the public. And the well-publicized foul-ups and bureaucratic bumbling of NASA's recent history make it uncertain that the space agency can carry the day with public opinion, as it should be able to do with ease in this case.

Because despite the protest chants and "holocaust" rhetoric, the case against Cassini is exceedingly weak. Indeed, the case is unconvincing in all its major points—ranging from the dangers of a plutonium release, to the availability of a solar-power alternative, to the military relevance of Cassini's nuclear devices. The anti-Cassini movement thrives on gross exaggerations of risk, bolstered by out-of-context quotes from NASA's and the European Space Agency's own publicly available documents.

One such document is a 1995 environmental-impact statement for the mission. At the Learning Alliance, Grossman handed out copies of one page from this massive volume, with key phrases underlined; the gist is that "approximately 5 billion people" or "most of the world population" could experience "radiation exposure" in the event of an "inadvertent reentry"—if Cassini were to collide with Earth or be burned up in the atmosphere—during the 1999 fly-by. Sounds horrible. But consider:

Such a "reentry," first of all, is wildly unlikely; NASA places its probability at less than 1 in 1.2 million. For Cassini to return to Earth, the spacecraft would have to experience a precisely timed malfunction or collision with a passing micrometeoroid, throwing it off target by hundreds of miles in exactly the right direction and magnitude, and damaging Cassini so severely that neither its automated navigational systems nor its ground controllers could alter the probe's new course in the slightest.

Moreover, even if all this did happen, the consequences would be far from a doomsday scenario involving "most of the world population." True, the plutonium would likely vaporize and be scattered throughout the atmosphere, but it would be like the proverbial spit in the ocean. The casualties might total some 120 additional cancer fatalities worldwide over a 50-year period, according to an estimate by NASA and the Energy Department. Even this number may be an overstatement. It is unclear whether the expected extra dose of radiation would have any health effects whatsoever. At about 1 millirem per person over 50 years, it's a tiny fraction of the radiation already present from cosmic rays, radon, and other sources.

The Earth fly-by is only one of the "two key periods of extreme danger," in the words of the Florida Coalition for Peace and Justice. The anti-Cassini movement also focuses on the risks of an accident during or shortly after launch. Here, of course, the possibility of an accident is not absurd; rockets sometimes explode or otherwise malfunction, and NASA's own analysis puts the risk of a plutonium release during the mission's early phases at around 1 in 350. But the consequences would be extremely limited; the official estimates of casualties from such a release are decimal figures less than one, which is to say: nobody.

Multiple precautions reduce the risks involved in a launch accident. Cassini, for one thing, will be located near the nose cone of the Titan IV rocket that lifts it into space, far from its rocket boosters. Inside the probe, the plutonium will be shielded by high-strength graphite and heat-resistant iridium. The rocket will be over water during most of its ascent, isolating it from populated areas and reducing the danger of a hard landing. Furthermore, plutonium—although sometimes described as the "most toxic substance known to science"—in fact poses little danger to humans except in the form of tiny particles that can be inhaled; Cassini's plutonium dioxide will be in a ceramic form, unlikely to be smashed into such tiny pieces.

Of course, the safety analyses by NASA and other agencies could be wrong. If so, the mission's critics have done a remarkably poor job of documenting the errors and providing alternative analyses. Grossman frequently cites Dr. Ernest Sternglass, a longtime anti-nuclear activist and professor emeritus at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, who claims that the death toll from a fly-by accident may be 30 to 40 million. But Sternglass has failed to respond to formal NASA requests that he substantiate this estimate. Far from discrediting the professor, this silence seems to have enhanced Sternglass's reputation among Cassini's opponents.

The notion that the spacecraft could use solar panels rather than nuclear energy is also unsubstantiated. Grossman hands audiences copies of an April 1994 European Space Agency press release announcing the development of "high-efficiency solar cells for use in future demanding deep-space missions," such as a

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Sean Delonas

planned comet probe called Rosetta. Not cited by Grossman is an August 1996 memo by the same agency, which concludes that even high-efficiency solar cells would be too weak for Cassini, operating nearly three times farther from the sun than the Rosetta spacecraft.

Indeed, Cassini would require solar arrays so large, heavy, and unwieldy that the spacecraft would be difficult to launch, let alone send to Saturn for scientific observations. But a blind faith in technology—so long as it is solar technology—pervades the anti-Cassini movement.

Could NASA's insistence on nuclear energy for Cassini be motivated by military considerations? Perhaps the space agency is secretly working toward the "nuclear-powered battle stations" of Kaku's warnings. According to the physicist: "What we are headed for is a nuclear-propelled rocket with nuclear-propelled lasers in outer space. That's what the military and that's what NASA would really like to do."

Besides the suspension of disbelief they require, such concerns are hard to reconcile with this fact: Cassini's nuclear generators will produce a mere 800 watts of electricity—less than is used by a dozen common household light bulbs. The spacecraft's instruments are designed to require a remarkably modest power supply, but one that will operate reliably during a 12-year mission in deep space. Plutonium is ideal for this purpose. But Cassini will be a very poor trial run for any future military mission (unless the enemy is extraterrestrial).

In a different sense, however, the anti-Cassini forces are right: The probe is indeed part of a broader "nuclearization" of space. In fact, it is hard to see how the civilian space program could proceed if—as the activists demand—all use of nuclear power in space comes to an end. Nuclear energy is not only an excellent power source for deep-space scientific missions; it is also the key to a future human presence on Mars, the moon, and elsewhere in space.

Establishing a base on Mars, for example, would require compact, lightweight energy sources—probably nuclear generators or reactors. (Massive solar arrays might eventually be built but would be impractical during the base's early phases.) In the longer run, a Mars colony might thrive on exports of deuterium, a substance useful to today's nuclear industry and essential for future nuclear-fusion reactors. As for nuclear-propelled rockets, they would rapidly accelerate transportation between Earth and Mars, as well as to more distant parts of the solar system.

Such visions, of course, are anathema to antinuclear activists. Yet space exploration holds vast potential for protecting Earth's environment. Mining and other polluting industries eventually might be relegated to the asteroid belt and other remote places, far removed from human populations. More mundanely, satellites and space probes provide valuable clues to climate change and other environmental processes on Earth.

The space program has long enjoyed broad public support, with controversy largely limited to questions of cost and practicality. With the Cassini mission, NASA now faces its first pitched battle with the antinuclear and environmental Left. It is not likely to be the last. ♦

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Her Own Grand Creation

The Self-Invention of Clare Boothe Luce

By Noemie Emery

Sylvia Jukes Morris, in her guarded new book, gives us the making of a legend, an opportunist, one of the great female careers of the 20th century. She shows us not only how Clare Boothe Luce made herself into a legend, but why she became the kind of legend she did.

Born in 1903, pre-liberation, Clare lusted from girlhood for fame. By the time Morris's book ends in 1942 (it is the first of two volumes), Clare is a year shy of 40 and has just been elected to Congress, having been an editor, an essayist, a playwright, a lead campaigner for Wendell Willkie in 1940, and a war correspondent on the Chinese and European fronts. More than 40 years before Geraldine Ferraro, she mused, not implausibly, of becoming vice president, or at least of holding a cabinet post.

She had been married, not happily, to two millionaires, given birth to one daughter, and enjoyed numerous lovers (the most famous of whom was Bernard Baruch). Her drive, brains, and talent commanded the awe of the most powerful men in the country. Yet a Karsh photo displayed near the end of the book shows a fragile, flower-like beauty, the sort of woman men long to protect.

To say that she "had it all" would be to put it lightly, but something appears to be missing. The parts of her life do not hang together. Clare seems distant from her own experience and work. She did many things well—perhaps too many—but the main point seemed to be that she be seen doing them. Her work itself could appear superficial. As Morris notes, though life had given Clare the raw stuff of tragedy, she expressed herself largely in farce. Much of her life had the quality of a staged performance. She specialized in the dazzling entrance (often at the expense of other women), received writers at *Vanity Fair* posed on a chaise like a Regency beauty, played out the part of antebellum lady in great sweeping dresses at the South Carolina plantation that Henry Luce bought for her.

Sylvia Jukes Morris
Rage for Fame
The Ascent of Clare Boothe Luce
Random House, 561 pp., $30

She had the ability to reinvent herself endlessly: from illegitimate waif to New York society matron to power-player in the World War II era. Through all this, it is hard to locate the central thread of personality, or even to know if one existed, apart from ceaseless adaptation to circumstance. Raymond Bret-Koch, a friend, called her "a beautiful, well-constructed façade, without central heating." She was, he decided, "not real."

Traditionally, unhappy children dream of fame as escape and salvation. Clare was no exception. Fame was revenge. Her magnetic father was still married to his second wife when he met the teenaged Ann—Clare's mother—who bore him two illegitimate children. The effect was destructive: Clare and her brother grew up not only in disorder and occasional squalor, but entangled in their parents' many lies. Ann, frustrated in her dreams of artistic expression (Clare's father, similarly, was a frustrated musician), developed a hunger for luxury, which she passed on to her children. When the family dissolved when Clare was nine, Ann told people her "husband" had died. She then worked as an escort—Morris says as a call girl—before being rescued by a rich admirer, who continued to support her even after she married someone else. Having failed to put her daughter on the stage—the beautiful Clare was a stiff, stilted actress—Ann began to groom her for a wealthy marriage. On money supplied by both husband and lover, she took Clare husband-hunting overseas.

For a while, they chased around Europe after one Francis Burke-Roche (whose twin brother would become the grandfather of Diana Spencer). But when Clare did strike gold, it was in Manhattan, when she shared a pew with George Tuttle Brokaw at the First Presbyterian Church. Brokaw was a lush and a layabout (also 23 years her senior), but he offered Clare two million dollars, and a place in society. It was a match made in Edith Wharton heaven. Later, her mother urged her to stay in the marriage until Brokaw killed himself drinking, because a widow's share would be larger than that of a divorced woman. But Clare, who had married to get out of her family's household, now wanted to get out of her husband's. At 26, she divorced, latched on to the Condé Nast empire, and began her glittering ascent.

Clare's first marriage was made under the previous order, governed by Edwardian mores of courtship and

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matrimony. Her second marriage, 12 years later, presaged the dual-celebrity marriage, the Power Couple, as later represented by the Clintons and Doles. Clare is the bridge between the old and the new: between the kept woman (her mother) and the career powerbroker.

Four men in sequence gilded her path: Brokaw, who gave her financial security and a place in the universe; Donald Freeman, her editor at *Vanity Fair*, who groomed her for publishing stardom; Bernard Baruch, who opened the doors to political power; and Henry Luce, who proposed marriage to her after one hour of conversation and put the wide world at her feet. Like her mother, and countless others, she used men to get what she wanted. Unlike many, she wanted to work.

She was happy to receive money and presents, but what she craved more deeply was training and mentoring. The men seemed to realize their place in her life. Wrote Freeman to her, as their affair was winding down, "In the first days, I told you that I would only too gladly step aside when my purpose had been served, when you were sure-footed, aware of your own ability and had carved a niche for yourself. . . . It is only human nature that I should be discarded. . . . As you proceed to greater things, it shall be my satisfaction that in the early days we shared many secrets, and my consolation shall be . . . your progress to fame." Days later, he died in a car crash that some people thought had not been an accident. Perhaps Clare's "progress" had not been consolation enough.

Clare duly took his job and consolidated her editorial power, but she already had her eye on something different—it was Baruch, the perennial *macher* and fixer-to-presidents, who focused her mind on a whole new political universe. She accompanied him to the 1932 convention that nominated Franklin Roosevelt and began to dream. "She set her mind on forcing Baruch to take a place in the next administration," writes Morris. "Fantasy built on fantasy: Bernie could then arrange to make her editor of the *Washington Post*. . . . Secretary Baruch might influence the President to appoint her to some government office. Relocated in the capital, with Mrs. Baruch remaining in New York, she could privately enjoy full possession of Bernie, while publicly influencing political opinion. 'I could make history there.'"

It was with the proposal from Henry Luce on December 9, 1934, that Clare's two worlds of political power and publishing met. Luce controlled both of them. Though Clare would always claim that *she* had had the idea for *Life* magazine, she was turned back in her efforts to exercise power inside the Luce publishing empire. (In revenge, she wrote her play *The Women* in three days.) But early in 1940, when she insisted on being sent to Europe as a war correspondent, Luce did not refuse her. Her dispatches, describing the last weeks of the Phony War and the Blitzkrieg that ended it, became the bestseller *Europe in the Spring*. On the strength of this, she became known as an authority on foreign policy. She was asked to join debates on the war and the American role in it, and then to speak for Willkie in the closing weeks of the campaign. She quickly emerged as a first-rate campaigner, pressing the need for American action and attacking FDR on the grounds that he wasn't interventionist enough.

SHE WANTED TO BE FDR, SINCLAIR LEWIS, GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, MME. CURIE, AND GRETA GARBO, ALL TOGETHER.

After the election, she went abroad again, this time to report from the Far Eastern theater. Later, it seemed only logical that she should be approached to run for Congress, as she was when a seat opened in 1942 in Fairfield County, Conn., a seat that had once been held by her mother's late husband. Her recruiter, who had met her before in her step-father's office, called her "100% politician, with all the instincts and wiles."

Said an acquaintance of hers, "She wants to be Franklin Roosevelt, Sinclair Lewis, Bernard Shaw, Mme. Curie, and Greta Garbo," all together. Except for the Curie part—Clare never tried to discover an element—she succeeded to a remarkable degree. She was a competent analyst of people and politics, a good writer, an amusing playwright, and, though lacking Garbo's austere beauty, an example of "It" in her time. But her real career was being Clare Boothe Luce, her self-creation. If splitting her time and attention among so many interests weakened each of those interests, the range of them, and the incongruity of some of them, added to her impact as a personality. If she was not the greatest brain, the greatest beauty, the greatest wit or writer, she was the best brain among the beautiful women, the most concerned among society figures, the most beautiful writer and wit. People attending a campaign rally or a discussion of the war in Europe expected to see a Mrs. Roosevelt or a Dorothy Thompson, but sometimes instead they saw a blond vision from *Vogue*. Some women could make brittle fun of the rich and nasty, others could argue about Lend Lease and naval rearmament, but Clare could do both. It was all grist for the myth.

In the end, Clare's versatility—her "inconsistency," Henry Luce called it—contained one unwavering consistency: She was where the action and the limelight were. Though her emphases changed, she gravitated unerringly to the center of interest, where she managed to be the star attraction. If she had failed as an actress in many auditions and screen

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tests—she could never play (or write about) another person—she was brilliant at playing herself. So too, her many subjects became aspects of her own celebrity—"All Clare on the Western Front," Dorothy Parker quipped about Clare's war dispatches. As with her parents, those frustrated artists, Clare's world was all a stage.

"Deep down, he's shallow," goes the old saying. But the truly vacuous often don't know it: Pamela Harriman thought she was fine. Clare Boothe Luce had no such illusions. She thought she had missed the best kinds of experience. Weeks before her marriage to Brokaw, she was contemplating elopement with an English guards officer, which did not come off because neither had money. (She later said that she wished he had forced her to marry him.) She wed Brokaw in a state of grim resignation. "Her collusion with Ann in capturing a naive millionaire made her feel contaminated," Morris writes. Her shell had thoroughly hardened, conditioned by several blows. The pain incurred when her father left was increased when he reappeared briefly seven years later, showing no signs of remorse. Clare was "devastated by her once-beloved father's apparent lack of regret for the lost years, and indifference to her future," says Morris. "Her feelings of loss and betrayal would sharpen over the years to sometimes suicidal fears of rejection, of being 'unwanted, unloved, *unworthy* of being loved.'"

This wasn't the worst. When she was 18, Clare had been rocked by what Morris calls a "core trauma." Her brother, "many years later, said his sister had a 'shock' before her first marriage. He had witnessed its impact, which 'affected her for years.'"

In March, while in Nice with her mother, she had met one Jack Tanner, a handsome divorcé of 47, and become infatuated with him. Back home in June, she suddenly left her mother's, took the train to New York, and appeared at Tanner's door. She was not allowed to come in. She did not go home, but stayed on in Manhattan. Her behavior then became strange. Under the name "C.J. Tanner," she took a room on West 72nd Street. Under the name "Jacqueline Tanner," she took an assembly-line job in lower Manhattan. Then she took sick. "Clare became acutely ill with what she would always describe as 'appendix' trouble," Morris relates. "She called her mother to come and get her, and on or about July 5 she underwent surgery at Greenwich Hospital. . . . It would be three weeks before she could walk again, and three months before she could dance or swim."

Clare Boothe Luce

Kent Lemon

Morris concludes that Clare was seduced and abandoned, and then had a devastating abortion that she referred to, in what was ostensibly the story of another woman, as the "ripping out" of her "soul." "An exquisite young thing, having given herself in love . . . having been in vulgar parlance 'betrayed,' found herself two months pregnant," Clare wrote in her diary, beginning in the third person and switching to the first. "I began passionately to love the growing child. . . . I wanted my child, yet I knew I must not have it . . . because . . . an illegitimate child *must not be born*."

Poor Clare. Small wonder she turned the lights out in that particular mansion and retreated into the calculation and "otherness" that many people remarked. As she wrote to her mother on the unpleasant first night of her marriage to Brokaw, "I belong to myself always! I am the mistress! I do as I please." She was, and she did.

This protected her, but it also constrained her, as an artist and as a human being, and it kept her in some ways from lasting achievement, making her a celebrity (like Baruch, famous mainly for being so) instead of a genuine star. It was also doubtless one reason for her lifelong spells of depression and restlessness, the impression, as one writer who knew her put it, that "some great sorrow or unresolved decision hung over her," something "unsmiling and sad." Sylvia Morris observes that Clare wrote reportage and farce, never tragedy. The tragedy Clare never wrote was in her life. ♦

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Film Noir Politics

The Ideology of a Movie Genre

By Paul Cantor

I am as much a fan of semi-gratuitous sex and violence as the next guy, but I have always been leery of film noir. These gritty movies featuring fatally seductive women, hard-nosed detectives, petty criminals, and corrupt officials, all photographed in inimitably stylish ways, had their heyday in the first 10 years after World War II and have long been the darlings of cinéastes—the sort of people who notice camera angles and not Rita Hayworth's figure when viewing a film like *Gilda*.

As a kid in New York City, I grew up watching Channel 9, which was owned by RKO, the studio most associated with film noir. Some of Channel 9's favorites, like *D.O.A.*, made a deep impression, but others left me cold and confused. I still cannot follow the plot of *The Big Sleep*, and for the life of me I cannot figure out what Zsa Zsa Gabor and Marlene Dietrich were doing in Mexico in *Touch of Evil*. Sometimes I am tempted to agree with the eminent (if fictional) critic for *Premiere* magazine, Libby Gelman-Waxner, when she explains that "the exact translation of film noir is 'sexy and really, really boring.'"

Nicholas Christopher's *Somewhere in the Night* forced me to rethink film noir. The book is a labor of love; in preparation for writing it, Christopher viewed all 317 movies listed in the *Film Noir Encyclopedia* and about 50 more to boot. *Somewhere in the Night* consists largely of detailed descriptions of Christopher's favorite film noirs, from *Out of the Past* (1947) all the way to *The Usual Suspects* (1995). These accounts are highly readable and accomplish their purpose: They make you want to go out and see the movies he discusses. Christopher's prose often mirrors the complex, overwrought texture of the movies themselves; he sometimes goes over the top, but on the whole he stays in control.

Photofest

Edmond O'Brien and Pamela Britton in D.O.A.

Which is more than I can say for his central thesis. "Film noir is an utterly homegrown modern American form," he tells us—a genre that captures the distinctive and irredeemable corruption of 20th-century America. Indeed, Christopher believes these movies form a distinct genre because of their portrait of a corrupt America caught up in a senseless and paranoid Cold War run by a military-industrial complex.

Christopher is the kind of person who is still worried about "the Strontium 90 in [his] bone marrow from the milk of the 1950s cows exposed to atmospheric testing of atomic bombs." That is to say, he is a leftwing intellectual straight out of central casting: For him, laissez-faire capitalism can legitimately be presented as indistinguishable from gangsterism, and the privately owned automobile is one of the most sinister forces of the century.

The classic film noirs really do reflect deep economic, social, and political problems in 1940s and 1950s America, and they do embody anxieties and fears that gripped the audiences for which they were made. But to regard these films as realistic depictions of postwar America is off the mark. They are, as Christopher himself repeatedly shows, among the most

Paul Cantor, professor of English at the University of Virginia, last wrote for The Weekly Standard *about Shakespeare.*

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stylized movies ever made. What actually binds these movies together is their highly *distorted* view of the world, a view as skewed as their camera angles. They are nightmares, no more true to reality than the dream visions of wealth in the screwball comedies of the 1930s. The directors of film noir wanted to make a certain *kind* of film, above all a film with a certain *look*. And that look was not native to America.

Indeed, film noir is about as American as apple strudel. The ingredients may be homegrown, but the recipe comes from Europe. The true progenitor of film noir was the German director Fritz Lang, whose 1931 movie *M.*, about a child molestor, is probably the real source of the genre. Christopher himself records how many of the directors associated with film noir came from Central or Eastern Europe: William Dieterle, Max Ophuls, Otto Preminger, Robert Siodmak, Edgar G. Ulmer, Billy Wilder, Fritz Lang himself—the list goes on and on. Even a famous noir cinematographer with the American-sounding name of John Alton turns out to have been born in Hungary.

Many of these noir masters were indeed great directors, and they had much to teach their American followers, but accurate knowledge of life in midwestern towns was not high on the list. In fact, the émigré directors did not come to America; they came to Hollywood. Basically, the only Main Street, U.S.A., they knew was on a Hollywood back lot: No wonder it looked so hollow to them. Having lived under authoritarian regimes, these Europeans had trouble understanding democracy, and especially its American embodiment. To them, the freedom of America, especially its economic freedom, must have looked in many respects like anarchy. One sometimes gets the feeling that these directors would have felt more at home if, when the obligatory drifter wanders into the small town at the opening of one of their movies, some official had asked to see his papers.

These films are frequently anti-American in a distinctively European way; that is no doubt why the French were the first to name and appreciate the genre. Many examples of film noir deal with the encounter between Americans and foreigners, especially Europeans. Though the Europeans may be evil, they are usually culturally superior to the Americans—more literate, more tasteful. As early as 1934, Edgar G. Ulmer, who went on to create the famous film noir *Detour*, made an astounding (and much underrated) horror movie, *The Black Cat*. It contrasts cultured but satanic Europeans, scarred by guilt from World War I, with nice but bland Americans, touring Europe but oblivious to the meaning of the horrifying drama being played out around them. The American characters end up sleeping throughout most of the film, while the Europeans in proto-noir fashion play chess, indulge in incest and necrophilia, and hold a Black Mass in Latin to the music of Bach.

Nicholas Christopher
Somewhere in the Night
Film Noir and the American City
Free Press, 288 pp., $25

The peculiar history of the film noirs and the men who made them is another chapter in the fascinating cultural history Allan Bloom unveiled in his *Closing of the American Mind*. The standard film-noir view of American values as empty and American institutions as hollow may indeed be another strange instance of what happened when European ideas and attitudes were transported to America as a result of the convulsions in Europe.

European directors, who had fled from Hitler and watched as their civilization was turned to rubble, were tempted to project a cataclysmic or apocalyptic vision of America as a warning of what might happen here. More conventional American filmmakers did not fully comprehend the inner meaning of these films, but they knew a good camera angle when they saw one. Since in movies style often *is* substance, the dark vision of film noir has suffused American movies for four decades.

Thus, film noir may ultimately be best understood in Bloom's terms—as nihilism Hollywood-style, a European glimpse into the abyss served up in glorious black-and-white to American matinee audiences. Maybe I was right as a kid in Brooklyn to be suspicious of those Million Dollar Movies on Channel 9. ♦

THANK GADDIS

Telling the Truth About the Cold War

By Ronald Radosh

Since the 1960s, the American academy has been locked in a debate over the nature of U.S. foreign policy and the origins of the Cold War. The "orthodox" school characterized the roots of the Cold War as the "brave and essential response of free men to Communist aggression," as Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. wrote in a seminal essay. But during the Vietnam War, a new gen-

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eration of younger scholars who came to be known as "revisionists" instead portrayed the United States as a nation whose quest for hegemonic control of the postwar world was the sole cause of the Cold War.

The revisionists are still with us. On Memorial Day, the historian Ronald Steel argued in the *New York Times* that the American decision to rebuild Western Europe at the war's end actually reinforced the "very 'iron curtain' that officials had inveighed against." The result of the Marshall Plan, Steel wrote, was that "within months Stalin clamped down on Hungary, imposed a Communist regime on Czechoslovakia, and tried, through a blockade of West Berlin, to pressure the Western allies to give up their plans to create a West German state."

Carolyn Eisenberg, a diplomatic historian at Hofstra University, has argued that the recovery program for Western Europe locked the Soviets out "of the most populated and industrialized portions of the country" and deprived "the USSR of the fruits of its World War II victory." This led inevitably to "a Soviet crackdown in eastern Germany and eastern Europe." If only the hegemony-grasping United States had not angered the benign Stalin we would not have had the Cold War, as well as the "Soviet drain of $14 billion from Eastern Europe."

John Lewis Gaddis
We Now Know
Rethinking Cold War History
Clarendon Press, 425 pp., $30

That such arguments can still be made in the 1990s shows the need for John Lewis Gaddis's important new study, *We Now Know*. Gaddis, America's leading diplomatic historian, is working from material recently found in Soviet archives—material that allows us to put to rest once and for all the question of where responsibility for the Cold War lies. Gaddis is forthright and adamant: "Once Stalin wound up at the top in Moscow, and once it was clear his state would survive the war, then it looks equally clear that there was going to be a Cold War whatever the West did."

Gaddis has not always held this view. In 1972, in *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947*, he blamed both superpowers equally for the Cold War. And as late as 1987, he still argued that the orthodox school "absolved the United States of responsibility for the breakdown of wartime cooperation; it made any future relaxation of tensions dependent upon changes of heart in Moscow, not Washington." It is a mark of how serious a scholar Gaddis is—and how honest a man he is—that he is willing to publish a book that undercuts his own analysis. Unlike the revisionists, he does not trust the evidence to fit a pre-determined anti-American thesis.

Indeed, as Gaddis moves painstakingly through the major conflicts of the epoch of the Cold War, he continually offers new information that makes his conclusion irrefutable. Stalin, he reveals, met with German Communist leaders as early as June 1945 for the purpose of working out plans to create a reunified Germany to exist within Moscow's sphere of influence. Temporary partition of Germany would make reunification eventually possible on his terms alone, Stalin believed. But the behavior of the Red Army, for one, assured resi-

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dents of the Russian zone that they would prefer anything to Soviet rule: New data show that 2 to 3 million women were raped as part of the Red Army's victory antics.

Stalin hoped that economic distress in western Germany would create a left-wing consensus and that parties of the Left under Moscow's control would win free elections. When that did not happen, he opted for creation of a Sovietized separate East German state. As Gaddis writes, even if his intentions for Germany were not at first clear, Stalin's "behavior elsewhere in Europe left little reason to assume their benevolence." The revisionists have it entirely backward: Major decisions that involved Germany were not the result of a Western grand design. Rather, they were responses to what Stalin had done: "his initial reluctance to reach a four-power agreement on Germany, his rejection of the Marshall Plan, his decision to blockade Berlin, his authorization to Kim Il-Sung to invade South Korea." In effect, Stalin's actions produced the opposite of what he intended—a rearmed and pro-Western Germany.

Nor does Gaddis let those who have blamed the Korean War on the Truman administration and the South Korean leader Syngman Rhee off the hook. The leading American historian of the Korean War, Bruce Cumings, has recently written that "no one and everyone" was responsible for the war and that the question of which power started it should not even be asked. Gaddis does not agree. In his reckoning, it was the USSR, and the USSR alone, that took active measures by backing North Korea in its effort to unify the peninsula by force. Indeed, Gaddis reveals that as Europe seemed impervious to the Soviet push, Asia looked more promising. Stalin showed a new aggressiveness, telling Mao that he was "reconciled" to a struggle with the United States. In a telegram sent by Stalin to Mao, we learn that Mao was in fact hesitant to send his troops to defend the North, but Stalin insisted. Indeed, even if intervention meant war between the Communist bloc and the United States, Stalin argued that such a result should not be feared. "Together," Stalin wrote, "we will be stronger than the USA and England . . . If a war is inevitable, then let it be waged now." Without Mao's army, Stalin said, North Korea would collapse, and the Communist dominoes would fall. "We must enter the war," Stalin demanded. And so Mao did.

The true story of the origins of the Cold War, Gaddis writes, is that "democratic capitalism proved during the critical decade of the 1950s that it could build societies based on sustained popular support as well as alliances capable of coordinated military action." In contrast, Communist societies "shattered one alliance and held together another only by force," its supposed economic achievements lying in ruin and held together on the graves of its murdered citizens. Containment—the brilliant strategy proposed by George F. Kennan in the late 1940s—did its job. The West countered Soviet expansion with firmness and measure, all the while avoiding war, and in the end the totalitarian monolith crumbled.

We Now Know appears at a particularly propitious time, because a new generation of revisionists is at work in the academy. In his prize-winning book *A Preponderance of Power*, Melvyn P. Leffler of the University of Virginia argues that U.S. officials "chose to contain and deter the Russians rather than to reassure and placate them." The new revisionists are unwilling to abandon their ideological orthodoxy despite all available evidence. Leffler, for example, explains that "rather than dwell on Soviet aims and motives that remain unknowable, I have chosen to focus on the U.S. side of the cold war equation." With the fall of the Soviet Union, Leffler's brand of history is exposed as entirely specious. Gaddis's striking and bold synthesis of Cold War history stands as a powerful antidote to those who persist in portraying America's efforts to save the world from Soviet communism as a form of malevolent imperialism. ♦

Divided We Continue

A Judge's Thoughts on Disunion

By Andrew Peyton Thomas

One of the most cherished and vigilantly guarded beliefs of contemporary American liberalism is that nine white liberals on the Supreme Court started the civil-rights movement. Handed down by the Warren Court in 1954, *Brown* v. *Board of Education* is widely held to have been the proximate cause of the mass protests that blasted away the last remnants of *de jure* racism in America.

Brown's status as an American Ninety-five Theses is undeserved and misleading. (For one thing, it was the murder of Emmett Till in 1955, as Juan Williams has noted, that sent outraged, united blacks into whites-only bus seats and lunch counters.) Yet the decision provided an important service in articulating a moral vision of a colorblind America. And it serves today as a reminder that liberals used to believe in such

Andrew Peyton Thomas, deputy counsel to the governor of Arizona, last wrote for The Weekly Standard *about victims' rights.*

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things, too. Alas, those days have now faded into '50s nostalgia, largely because of what a half-century of jurisprudence has done to undermine *Brown*'s vision of integration.

It is therefore reassuring that a book should emerge from the judiciary that challenges the Balkanizing trends in our courts and culture. In *One Nation Indivisible*, Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson III takes up the range of racial and ethnic issues that affect contemporary separatism—affirmative action, immigration, voting rights, and so on. But unlike others who have covered the same ground recently, Wilkinson makes his case with such a firm but reserved manner that one can see why "judicial temperament" used to be a legitimate criterion for selecting judges, before it became a catchall way of borking conservative nominees to the bench.

Wilkinson, chief judge of the Fourth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, was appointed by President Reagan in 1984. And true to the principles of that administration,

J. Harvie Wilkinson III
One Nation Indivisible
How Ethnic Separatism Threatens America
Addison-Wesley, 256 pp., $24

Wilkinson laments that the country has turned away from the legacy of *Brown* in its acceptance of the meltdown of the melting pot. "Civil rights law," he argues, should "regard racial separatism not simply as a moral wrong but as a barrier to togetherness." Lately, though, racial separatism has become fashionable, lucrative, and highly resistant to reform. Recent trends in academia, the courts, and Congress have transmuted government into an "endless racial roundtable." The growing acceptance of separatism fosters "a society where leaders neglect the need for interracial communication, where groups regard public resources as matters of racial entitlement, and where every minority asserts a special racial experience which others have not had and thus cannot question."

Unfortunately, judges have had a lot to do with the transformation of America into this "racially obsessed Republic." Wilkinson organizes the government's separatist transgressions into four main areas: politics (racial gerrymandering), entitlements (affirmative action), bilingual education, and speech codes.

The chapter addressing racial gerrymandering is especially fruitful. It offers a pithy, forthright explanation of the circumstances that fuel the perpetual feuds over the Voting Rights Act during redistricting. State legislatures drawing up new legislative boundaries face a lawyer-enriching dilemma. They "cannot ignore race," says Wilkinson, "because the Voting Rights Act requires that the racial composition of a district be a factor in redistricting." On the other hand, a recent Supreme Court ruling (in *Miller* v. *Johnson*) prohibits race from being the predominant factor, although it may be a "limited" factor. The vagueness of this term invites litigation and rancor. The high court's interpretations of the act have been a "mess," Wilkinson says, contradictory in some respects and patched together by badly splintered majorities.

Affirmative action, in

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turn, is incendiary because it rewards groups that "highlight racial oppression at the hands of America in order to bolster their present claims for preferential treatment." To enlarge their portion of the spoils, ethnic activists coin broad terms that lump together (under their leadership, of course) diverse groups that have far less in common historically and culturally than do, for example, black and white Americans. Wilkinson is too genteel to note that the two most offensive terms at issue—"Latino" and "Asian"—are among the most presumptuous absurdities of modern sociology, hammering together as they do peoples of such ancient racial, linguistic, and cultural diversity as to make such groupings worthless for anything except the self-aggrandizement of the activists who press the terms into service.

The most disappointing chapter in the book deals with speech codes. In what could have been a groundbreaking analysis of the legality of these codes, Wilkinson briefly canvasses some of the speech codes adopted in major universities and dismisses them all indiscriminately as having an unacceptable "chilling effect" on free speech. A more careful treatment would not have simply skipped over, for example, Stanford's limited speech code banning "fighting words," defined by the university as speech "addressed directly to the [insulted] individual" that "makes use of insulting or 'fighting' words or non-verbal symbols."

Wilkinson's cursory treatment of speech codes is only one of several shortcomings. In his analysis of constitutional questions, Wilkinson seems oblivious to the problem of judicial activism, the stimulant of many racial woes. Most conspicuously, in his discussion of the equal-protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, he accepts at face value the modern tendency to conscript this Reconstruction amendment into combat against a broad range of social ills. Today, the amendment is commonly enlisted—successfully—by feminists, sexual deviants, and just about anyone else who has a beef with some government official or policy. In fact, as Raoul Berger, professor emeritus at Harvard Law School, has exhaustively demonstrated, the Fourteenth Amendment was designed with the narrow, clear, and admirable goal of ensuring simply that ex-slaves would be treated as equals before the law when their lives, liberty, or property was jeopardized in a criminal or civil action.

It is time for conservative jurists to restore to this amendment its original mission, thereby reducing much judicial mischief. Wilkinson not only fails to do this, he says at one point, incredibly, that the term "strict constructionism," like "law and order," amounts to nothing more than "code words" used by unscrupulous politicians to appeal to white racists.

WILKINSON OFFERS A REMARKABLE VERBAL SHRUG: "TO THIS DAY, I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THE SIMPSON VERDICT WAS A RACIAL STATEMENT."

Indeed, Wilkinson looks favorably on judicial activism when it suits his purposes. Like many on the right, he cheers on a high court that is increasingly likely to strike down racial quotas and similar offenses on grounds that they violate the equal-protection clause. But the Fourteenth Amendment no more prohibits affirmative action than it does the erstwhile all-male admissions policies of the Virginia Military Institute. Conservatives should stick to the original intent behind the amendment, and the Constitution generally. Otherwise, the document loses all meaning and judges elude all constraints. Wilkinson thinks otherwise, as does the Supreme Court, which now finds itself competing with Congress to undo racial preferences that, however misguided, are after all democratically and constitutionally enacted.

At times, Wilkinson strains a bit to posture as a centrist. For example, he offers this remarkable verbal shrug: "To this day, I do not know whether the Simpson verdict was a racial statement." The verdict was, of course, an unambiguous racial statement of a highly inflammatory sort, and Wilkinson's hesitancy to say so is odd.

Finally, the book is marred by too many humdrum declarations that border on clichés and detract from a work of otherwise significant stature—"What we make of New America is up to us"; "New America requires new thinking on civil rights"; "There is much debate these days about what America means. There is no one answer to this question." The very term "New America" as a description of our racially transformed republic is itself regrettably dull.

Similarly, the biggest criticism likely to be made of *One Nation Indivisible* is that there is little new or original in the book as compared with other books of its type now on the shelves. This is fair enough, but conservatives know that such a standard, by itself, is a poor measure of any book's worth. Most original ideas are, of course, wrong; originality in the area of public policy is mostly a recipe for disaster. It is useful for public figures like Judge Wilkinson to reaffirm the customs and ideas that once bound us together but that have now been jettisoned out of a combination of greed, ethnic pride, and intellectual negligence. Wilkinson performs this service well, offering, despite his lapses, a solid contribution to the growing body of literature assailing America's flirtation with disunion. ♦

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President and Mrs. Clinton have had a steadfast supporter in journalist Sid Blumenthal, who will soon serve them in the White House.
—*Washington Post, June 16*

Parody

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON DC

TO: SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT

FROM: DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL

RE: WHITE HOUSE ORIENTATION

Congratulations on your appointment! "It's so nice to have you back where you belong," as the songwriters say, but we know you've always been here in spirit. Now it's like official!

Per our agreement, your professional responsibilities include "strategizing vision," "implementing vision strategies," and "creative visualization of the bridge to the 21st century." You and Erskine, of course, can work out the precise details. I wanted to take this opportunity to give you a few "pointers" about your remaining duties.

1) Please remember that the First Lady's laundry is to be picked up daily at 6 a.m. sharp and returned no later than 3 p.m. Really, Sid, she's a stickler about this. Pablo in dry cleaning can be a little slow (Sometimes you wonder how they get anything done in Mexico!) and you've got to keep on him. One "strategy" you might want to "implement": Tell Pablo, "It's not ready yet? Gee, I'd hate for your wife's green card to suddenly disappear!" This is a little gag Mr. Stephanopoulos worked out, and believe me, it works. (Plus it's fun.)

2) Presidential Protocol Directive 5.95 (c) requires that the caddy not turn his back on the president unless specifically requested to do so. Obviously this will often require you to wade into water hazards backwards to retrieve the president's nine iron. I understand the inconvenience, but the dignity of the office (his, not yours) requires it. Secret Service has your hip boots. And when handling the president's score card, just remember, as the president likes to say, "My middle name is Mulligan!"

3) Mr. Lindsey informs me that you will be taking over "Marriott duties." You may use your own car, of course, but make sure the blanket is ready in the back seat, folded lengthwise. The president prefers to hide under a Laura Ashley floral throw blanket model #364 (it's really lovely) with a flashlight so he can read while you drive. The man is a bookworm!

4) Finally, Socks has two litter boxes (locations shown on attached floorplan). They should be emptied twice daily, and the droppings forwarded to the BC presidential archive in Little Rock. I'm told you did the same for Ms. Brown's Persian at the New Yorker, so you should feel right at home. Welcome aboard, Sid!

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